

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

No. 325.]

SATURDAY, JULY 15, 1865.

[PRICE 2d.]

HALF A MILLION OF MONEY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BARBARA'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER XXVII. THE LAST MEET OF THE SEASON.

WHEN Mr. Trefalden arrived at Castletowers at ten o'clock on Thursday morning, he was somewhat dismayed to find the court-yard crowded with carriages, the terrace full of ladies, and the open, lawn-like space in front of the house all alive with scarlet coats, horses, grooms, and hounds. Having walked across from the station by the field-paths, he came upon the noisy scene all at once, and learned from half a dozen voices together, that it was the last meet of the season.

Fully expecting to find his appointment forgotten, and Saxon among the riders, he passed on to the house, where the first person he met was Miss Colonna, an amazone, with her riding-whip in her hand, and a drooping feather in her hat.

"Ah, Mr. Trefalden," she said, "we have just been talking of you. You will find none but enemies here."

"I trust that I am not to include Mademoiselle Colonna among that number."

"Of course not," she replied, with a smile that had some little mockery in it. "Is not Mr. Trefalden enrolled among the Friends of Italy? By the way, you have not yet seen yourself in our printed report for March. I have placed your name at the head of a column."

The lawyer bowed, and professed himself infinitely flattered.

"May I ask," said he, "why I am so unfortunate as to have provoked all this enmity to which you refer?"

"Because your presence deprives us of the pleasure of your cousin's society, and prevents him from putting on a scarlet coat, and distinguishing himself as a mighty hunter before the ladies."

"When he would infallibly have broken his neck," said Mr. Trefalden, dryly.

"By-the-by, why did you not tell me he was your cousin, that day we met at Reichenau?" asked Miss Colonna, with provoking directness.

"I really cannot tell—unless I supposed the fact could have no kind of interest for you."

"Or were you afraid I should want to enlist him also? But here is my steed."

"May I assist you to mount, Mademoiselle Colonna?"

"Many thanks," she said, as, having taken her tiny foot with the reverence of a devotee, Mr. Trefalden lifted her dexterously to the saddle, and arranged the folds of her habit. "I had really no idea, Mr. Trefalden, that you, a doctor learned in the law, were also an accomplished cavalier."

"Why not, signora?"

"Indeed, I can hardly say; but I should as soon have thought of exacting escort-duty from the Archbishop of Canterbury. Do you hunt?"

"I have hunted; but not for several years. I have no time for cruelty, as a fine art."

"A subtle distinction, I presume, between business and pleasure," she said, laughingly. "I beg you to understand, however, Mr. Trefalden, that I do not hunt at all. I only ride to cover, and see the hounds throw off. I love to hear their 'gallant chiding'—but I am always sorry for the fox."

"I fear Lord Castletowers will not endorse that amiable sentiment," replied the lawyer, as the Earl came running down the broad stone steps, followed by some five or six other gentlemen. Seeing Mademoiselle Colonna already in the saddle, he bit his lip, and said with unconcealed disappointment:

"Has Vaughan again anticipated me in my office?"

The proud blood rose to Olimpia's cheek.

"To assist a lady whose horse waits at the door, is, I believe, the office of whatever gentleman may be at hand, Lord Castletowers," she replied, haughtily. "Mr. Trefalden was so obliging as to help me to mount this morning."

The Earl turned in some confusion, and shook hands with his lawyer.

"I beg your pardon, Trefalden," he said, hastily. "I had not observed you. Won't you take a run with us? Ah, no—I forgot. You are here to-day on business; but we shall meet at dinner. You will find your cousin in the dining-room."

And with this he sprang upon his black mare, reined up beside Mademoiselle Colonna, and began speaking in a low earnest tone that was audible to her alone. But the lady answered him briefly, bade Mr. Trefalden a courteous good morning, and rode swiftly out of the court-yard, followed by the red-coats as by a guard of honour.

Mr. Trefalden looked after them, and smiled thoughtfully.

"Poor Castletowers!" said he to himself. "She has no heart for anything but Italy."

And then he went into the house, where he found the breakfast over, the dining-room deserted, and everybody out upon the terrace. It was a large assembly, consisting chiefly of ladies, and the general interest was at that moment centred in the hunting party, then gaily winding its way down the green slope, and through the chequered shade of the oaks.

When the last gleam of scarlet had disappeared, Mr. Trefalden went up to Saxon, who was standing somewhat dolefully apart from the rest, laid his hand upon his shoulder, and said:

"Why so dull and mute, young sinner?" Is it so hard a fate to stay in-doors and read through a bagful of musty parchments, when others are breaking their necks over five-barred gates?"

Saxon turned with his frank smile, and grasped his cousin's hand.

"It did seem hard a minute ago," replied he; "but now that you are come, I don't care any longer. Castletowers said we were to go into the library."

"Then we will go at once, and get our business over. I hope your brains are in good order for work this morning, Saxon."

But Saxon laughed, and shook his head doubtfully.

"You must be my brains in matters of this kind, cousin William," said he. "I understand nothing about money, except how to spend it."

"Then, my dear fellow, you know more than I gave you credit for," replied Mr. Trefalden. "Money is a very pleasant and desirable thing, but there are three great difficulties connected with it—how to get it, how to keep it, and how to spend it—and I am not at all sure that to do the last in the best way is not the hardest task of the three. My business with you to-day, however, concerns the second of those propositions. I want to show you how to keep your money; for I fear there are only too many who enjoy teaching you the way to spend it."

They had now reached the library, a long low room, panelled and furnished with dark oak, and looking out upon the same quiet garden that was commanded by the window of Signor Colonna's little study. The books upon the shelves were mostly antique folios and quartos in heavy bindings of brown and mottled calf, and consisted of archaeological and theological works, county histories, chronologies, sermons, dictionaries, peerages, and parliamentary records. Here and there a little row of British essayists, or a few modern books in covers of bright cloth, broke the ponderous monotony; but the Castletowers collection, being chiefly made up of those works which it is said no gentleman's library should be without, was but a dull affair, and attracted few readers. A stag's skull and antlers presided spectrally above the door, and an elaborate genealogical tree of the Castletowers family, cumbrously framed in old black oak, hung over the mantelpiece like a hatchment.

"Well, cousin William," said Saxon, with an

anticipative yawn, "where is the bag of parchments?"

But Mr. Trefalden laid only his pocket-book and a small case-map on the table before him.

"The bag," he replied, "was but a figure of speech—a legal fiction. I have no parchments whatever to inflict upon you—nothing but a few columns of figures, a letter or two, and a map of Western Asia."

Saxon opened his eyes.

"What in the world have I to do with Western Asia?" said he.

"That is just what I am here to tell you."

CHAPTER XXVIII. THE NEW OVERLAND ROUTE.

"In the first place, Saxon," said Mr. Trefalden, "I have done for you what I suppose you would never have thought of doing for yourself: I have had your account made up at Drummonds'. I confess that the result has somewhat surprised me."

"Why so?"

"Well, not because you have spent a great deal of money in a very short time, for I anticipated that; but because so many of your cheques appear to have gone into the pockets of your friends. Here, for instance, is the name of Sir Charles Burgoyne—a name which recurs no fewer than fourteen times within the space of five weeks. The first entry is for five hundred and twenty-five pounds; date, the twenty-first of March."

"That was for the mare and cab," said Saxon, quickly. "It was his own favourite mare, and he let me have her. He had been offered five hundred and fifty, only a day or two before."

Mr. Trefalden smiled dubiously, and glanced back at a memorandum entered in his note-book a few weeks before, when sitting behind that morning paper, in a window of the Eretheum club-house. The memorandum told a different tale. He contented himself, however, with writing the words "mare and cab" against the sum, and then went on.

"Second cheque—six hundred and ten pounds; date, the twentieth-ninth of March."

"My two riding-horses, and their equipments," explained Saxon.

"Humph! and were these also Sir Charles Burgoyne's favourites?"

"No, not at all. He was kind enough to buy them for me, from a friend who was reducing his establishment."

Mr. Trefalden checked off the six hundred and ten pounds, as before.

"Third cheque—two thousand pounds; date, the thirty-first of March."

"Oh, that's nothing," said Saxon. "That's not spent—it's only borrowed."

"By Sir Charles Burgoyne?"

"Yes."

"And the next, for two thousand five hundred, dated April the third?"

"I—I rather think that's borrowed also," replied Saxon.

"Then come various smaller cheques—four hundred, two hundred and fifteen, fifty-seven,

one hundred and five, and so forth; and by-and-by another heavy sum—one thousand and fifty pounds. Do you remember what that was for?"

"Yes, to be sure; that was the thousand guineas for the mail phaeton and pair; and even Castletowers said it was not dear."

Mr. Trefalden turned to another page of his note-book.

"It seems to me," observed he, "that Lord Castletowers is the only young man of your acquaintance whose friendship has not been testified in some kind of pecuniary transaction. Here, now, is the Honourable Edward Brandon. Has he also been generously depopulating his stables in your favour?"

Saxon laughed, and shook his head.

"I should think not, indeed!" said he. "Poor Brandon has nothing to sell. He hires a horse now and then, when he has a sovereign to spare—and that is seldom enough."

"Which, being translated, means, I presume, that the two thousand and odd pounds paid over at different times to Mr. Brandon are simply loans?"

"Just so."

"And Guy Greville, Esquire—who is he?"

"One of our Erecetheum men; but that's a mere trifle."

"You call two hundred and fifty pounds a mere trifle? Howard Patrick Fitz Hugh, Esquire—four hundred pounds. Is he another member of your club?"

"Yes, a very pleasant fellow, an Irishman."

"Both loans, of course?"

Saxon nodded.

"Then come a number of miscellaneous cheques, evidently payments to tradesmen—one, I see, of nearly a thousand, to Hunt and Roskell. How much of that went for the prima donna's bracelet, you young rogue?"

"I haven't the least idea. Gillingswater takes care of the bills."

"There is another little item that must not be forgotten," said the lawyer; "namely, that trifle of fifty-nine thousand pounds to Mr. Laurence Greatorex."

"Which is not spent, but deposited," said Saxon, sagely.

"Exactly so, and which might have been deposited to equal advantage in the crater of Vesuvius. But enough of details. Have you any notion of what the sum total amounts to?"

"None whatever."

"What do you say to seventy-eight thousand six hundred and twelve pounds?"

"I am afraid I have no original remarks to offer upon the fact," replied Saxon, with unabated cheerfulness. "What is your opinion, cousin William?"

"My opinion is, that a young man who contrives to get through fourteen thousand pounds of uninvested capital per week, would find the air of Hanwell highly conducive to his general health."

"But, cousin, do you think I have done wrong in spending so much?"

"I think you have done foolishly, and ob-

tained no kind of equivalent for your money. I also think you have been unscrupulously plundered by your acquaintances; but, after all, you have gained some little experience of life, and you can afford to pay for it. To tell you the truth, I foresaw something of this kind for you; and, having introduced you to Lord Castletowers, I purposely kept myself and my advice in the background for a few weeks, and let you take your first plunge into the world in whatever way you pleased. I had no wish, Saxon, to play Mentor to your Telemachus."

"I should have been very grateful to you, though," said Saxon.

"Well, I am just going to begin, so you can be grateful by-and-by," replied Mr. Trefalden, with his pleasant smile. "I am here to-day for the purpose of inoculating you with financial wisdom, and pointing out to you how absolutely necessary it is that your fortune should be invested to advantage."

"You told me that before."

"Yes; but now I am about to prove it. Eight weeks ago, young man, you were worth four million seven hundred and seventy-six thousand pounds. Since that time, you have embarrassed yourself of a good deal of the odd money; but, putting that aside we will, for the sake of convenience, reckon your fortune in round numbers at four millions and a half."

"Certainly. At four millions and a half," repeated Saxon, wearily.

"Well, have you ever asked yourself how long your four millions and a half are likely to last, if you simply go on as you have begun?"

"No—but they would last out my life, of course."

"They would last you just six years, nine weeks, and three days."

Saxon was speechless.

"You can now judge for yourself," said Mr. Trefalden, "whether your money ought, or ought not, to be placed at interest, and whether I am making myself needlessly obnoxious to you to-day, when you might have been galloping after the fox. What you require, Saxon, is a fixed income."

"Yes—I see that."

"And, as I told you long since, your property, if well invested, will bring you a princely revenue. At five per cent, it will produce two hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year; and at seven and a half per cent, three hundred and seventy-five thousand—more than a thousand pounds a day. I believe, Saxon, that I have found an investment for you at seven and a half per cent, for as much of your fortune as you may be inclined to put into it."

"A thousand pounds a day—seven and a half per cent," stammered Saxon; "but isn't that usury, cousin William?"

"Usury!" repeated Mr. Trefalden, with an amused smile. "Why, my dear fellow, no man of business ever calculates on making less than seven or eight per cent of his capital!"

"But then he is a man of business, and his skill and experience make part of his capital;

so he ought to gain more than a rich idler who only invests his wealth for an income," replied Saxon, with a flash of practical good sense that showed how easily he could master even the science of money, if he chose to think about it.

Mr. Trefalden was positively startled. He had so accustomed himself of late to think of his young kinsman as a mere child in worldly affairs, that he had, perhaps, insensibly fallen into the error of under-estimating his abilities.

"There is some truth in what you observe, Saxon," said he; "but it is a truth that does not affect the present question. It would take too long, and lead us too far from the subject in hand, to go into it philosophically; but you may rely on my experience when I tell you that, as a private individual, you have every right to accept seven and a half per cent, if you can obtain it with safety. My aim is to ensure you a liberal income; and if I have been somewhat tardy about it, you must blame my over-anxiety, and not my want of zeal."

"Dear cousin William, I have never dreamed of blaming either!" exclaimed Saxon, warmly.

"I have throughout been keenly sensible of the responsibility that devolves upon me in this matter," continued Mr. Trefalden. "And I confess that, up to the present time, I have been cautious to timidity."

"I am sure of it—sure of it," said Saxon, with outstretched hand; "and am so heartily grateful that I know not in what words to put all I should like to say."

"I am very glad you place such confidence in me," replied the lawyer, returning the young man's cordial grasp; but the voice and the hand were both cold and unimpulsive.

With this he turned to his papers, placed them ready for reference, and opened out the map upon the table. Then he paused, as if collecting his thoughts upon the subject on which he was next about to speak. Prompt man of business as he was, one might almost have thought that Mr. Trefalden was reluctant to approach the very topic which he had come all the way from London to discuss. At length he began.

"Like most cautious persons, Saxon, I am no friend to speculation; but I do not, like those who are over-cautious, confound speculation with enterprise. In England our great public works are almost invariably originated and conducted by private bodies; and herein lies the chief spring of our national prosperity. Enterprise has made us what we are—mere speculation would have ruined us. What I have to propose to you, Saxon, is an enterprise of extraordinary importance, a gigantic enterprise, as regards its result, and one of comparatively trifling magnitude, as regards its cost. But you must give me all your attention."

"Indeed, I am doing so."

"I need not ask if you know the ordinary line of route from England to India, by way of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea?"

"The Overland Route? Certainly—upon the map."

"And you know the track of our merchant

vessels to India and China, round the Cape of Good Hope?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Then oblige me by glancing at this map, and following the line which I have marked upon it in red ink. It begins, you see, at Dover, and proceeds by Calais and Marseilles to Alexandria, where . . ."

"But I see two red lines crossing the Mediterranean," interrupted Saxon.

"We will follow this one first. At Alexandria it joins the railway, is carried across the Isthmus to Suez, thence traverses the Red Sea to Aden, and proceeds by the Arabian Sea to Bombay. This route is the prescriptive property of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam-packet Company. Following it one may travel from London to Bombay in twenty-four days; and we have hitherto been accustomed to regard the accomplishment of this fact as one of the triumphs of modern civilisation."

"And so it is!" exclaimed Saxon.

"Ay, but it costs over a hundred pounds," replied Mr. Trefalden; "and the traveller who cannot afford so large a fare must go round by the Cape, and so lose either ninety-four days in a steamer, or four months in a sailing vessel. Now look at my other red line, and see where it departs from the first."

"It passes through the Straits of Messina, touches at Cyprus instead of at Malta, and goes direct to Sidon, instead of to Alexandria," said Saxon, now both surprised and interested.

"Precisely so; and from Sidon takes an almost direct course to Palmyra, whence it follows the valley of the Euphrates, and comes out upon the Persian Gulf at the point where the united waters of the Euphrates and Tigris empty themselves into the sea, one hundred and thirty miles below Korna."

"And then it goes straight down the Persian Gulf, and over to Bombay," said Saxon.

Mr. Trefalden looked up with his finger on the map.

"If," said he, "this line from Sidon to the sea represented a fine railway, in connexion with a first-class steam-packet service at either extremity, which route to India do you think you would prefer?"

"This, of course. No man in his senses could do otherwise. The distance, to begin with, must be much less."

"About twelve or fourteen hundred miles."

"And then there would be far more of the journey performed by land—and through what a land! Palmyra—the plains of Babylon—Basora . . . by Jove! One would make the journey to India for the mere sake of visiting places so famous in the history of the ancient world!"

"I confess that I regard this project from a less archæological point of view," replied Mr. Trefalden. "Now hear the practical side of it; and understand that I am giving you only approximate facts—facts in the rough, before they have been squared and smoothed by surveyors and accountants. We calculate that this line of railway will extend over about seven

hundred and fifty, or eight hundred miles; that is to say, it will exceed the line now laid down between Calais and Toulon by not more than a hundred and fifty or two hundred miles. It will unquestionably draw to itself the whole merchant traffic of India, China, Persia, and Ceylon. It will be the nearest route to Australia, and it will bring Bombay within twelve or fourteen days of London."

"It takes one's breath away!" said Saxon.

Mr. Trefalden smiled, a smile of quiet triumph.

"But this is not all," said he. "We have reason to believe that at Hit, where there are mineral springs, we shall find coal; and as Hit lies very nearly half way between Sidon and the Gulf, we shall be enabled to supply our steam-service at both shores, and our whole line of railway from one central source."

"Those must be the bituminous fountains mentioned by Herodotus," said Saxon, quickly; "the fountains of Is that supplied asphalt for cementing the walls of Babylon!"

"If possible, Saxon, oblige me by confining your attention to the nineteenth century," expostulated the lawyer. "Try to think of Babylon as a railway station, and of Palmyra as a place where the guard allows twenty minutes for refreshments. Yes—I knew that would appal you. Now, perhaps, you will give me your opinion of the New Overland Route."

"My opinion!" repeated Saxon. "You might as well ask my opinion of the geology of Uranus!"

"That is the very consideration which deters me from recommending it as an investment."

"Oh, you need not let it do that," laughed Saxon. "I am as ignorant of one business matter as another. I told you just now that you must be my brains, whenever money came in question!"

"But what makes it still more difficult is, that in this case I may not let you benefit by any other person's brains," replied Mr. Trefalden. "There are many interests to be combated in the promotion of such a scheme as this; and it is of importance that we keep it, for the present, profoundly secret. Whether you interest yourself in it or not, I must bind you over, Saxon, to breathe no word of this matter to any living ear."

Saxon gave the promise unhesitatingly; but did not understand why it should be necessary.

"Because we must not rouse opposition before our system is matured," explained Mr. Trefalden.

"But if the new route is so great an improvement," urged Saxon, "who would oppose it?"

"All those persons who are interested in the old one," replied his cousin, smiling. "The Peninsular and Oriental Steam-packet Company—the shareholders and directors of the Suez Railway—the forty thousand English who colonise Alexandria."

"And would all those persons be ruined?"

"Every reformation ruins somebody," observed Mr. Trefalden, philosophically.

"Yes, but the reformer is bound to balance present evil against future good. Would this future good outweigh the present evil?"

"Unquestionably."

"In what way?"

Mr. Trefalden was momentarily puzzled. He had contemplated this subject from all sides except the one now presented to him. The benevolent point of view had never occurred to him.

"Well," he suggested, "it will give employment to thousands . . ."

"But it will throw thousands out of employment."

"—it will promote commerce, extend the boundaries of civilisation, improve Arabia . . ."

"I wouldn't help to ruin forty thousand English for the sake of improving Arabia," interrupted Saxon, hastily.

"—and bring the shores of England and Hindostan so near, that, were another mutiny to break out, we could land our troops at Bombay within twelve days after receiving the intelligence. The value of that possibility alone is incalculable."

"That is true; but . . ."

"And of our absolute success," continued Mr. Trefalden, "there can be no kind of doubt. I have been almost unwilling, Saxon, to embark you in an enterprise the advantages of which, however obvious to practical men, are not open to immediate test; but it is my duty to tell you that I have never known so brilliant an opening for the employment of capital."

"But . . ."

"Seven and a half per cent is merely the rate of interest offered by the company while the works are in progress; but when once the route is completed, the returns will be enormous. Your seven and a half per cent, my dear fellow, will become twenty-five—perhaps fifty."

"I don't want twenty-five, or fifty," replied Saxon. "I have more money now than I know what to do with."

"I am sure you will always make good use of whatever wealth you possess," said Mr. Trefalden.

"And it would break my heart to injure all those who live by the present system. Why, for instance, should I desire to ruin the Peninsular and Oriental Steam-packet Company?"

"We hope to do no such thing," said Mr. Trefalden. "We shall propose a coalition, and probably employ the very same vessels."

"And then the English colony at Alexandria!"

"Sidon will become what Alexandria is now—or rather, will become a far more important place than Alexandria has ever been since the days of her ancient prosperity. Just as we now require banks, warehouses, quays, and churches at Alexandria, we shall then require them at Sidon. The Alexandrian colonists are wealthy and enterprising: they will simply remove to the new port, and in ten years' time will be richer than if they had remained where they were."

"Do you really think so?"

"I do not think it; I know it. And the

Suez Railway Company will fare no worse than the rest. We shall in all probability take their whole body of officials into our service, and incorporate the shareholders' interests with our own. But the fact is, Saxon, you know too little of life to be able to judge a question of this kind; and I see you do not take kindly to the idea, so we will say no more about it."

"I could not have borne to do harm," said Saxon; "but now that you explain the matter so fully, I am quite willing . . ."

But Mr. Trefalden would not hear of it.

"No, no," he said, coldly, gathering up his papers and folding his map. "I was anxious to do all that was possible for your interests; but it is, perhaps, better that you have nothing to say to the New Route."

"Yet, if you think well of it . . ."

"I think so well of it, that I am about to invest all I possess in the company's shares; but that need not influence you. In point of fact, Saxon, I had rather leave your money in the funds. You will get only three per cent; but you can re-invest when you please, and the responsibility of advising you will be mine no longer."

"You are vexed with me, cousin William!"

"I regret that you think me capable of advising you to do what would not be right," replied Mr. Trefalden, somewhat stiffly.

"But I think nothing of the kind! I was in error; but, as you said only a moment before, I know nothing of life, so pray do not hold me accountable for the sins of my ignorance."

"Tush! not another word," said the lawyer, kindly. "You have said more than enough."

"And the investment?"

"With regard to the investment, I think the most satisfactory course will be for me to leave your money in government stock, at three per cent. Even so, it will bring you one hundred and thirty-five thousand per annum."

"As you please. It will be less trouble to spend, and make me quite as happy!"

Mr. Trefalden looked very grave.

"It will also leave you with less to give, and less power to make others happy," said he.

The careless smile faded from Saxon's lip.

"I wish I knew what I ought to do!" he exclaimed, with an impatient sigh. "What do you really wish me to do, cousin William?"

"I had rather not say more than I have already said," replied Mr. Trefalden. "You have had my advice."

"So I have—and of course I ought to follow it. You won't refuse to help me to do so?"

"Certainly not. You need only make your decision, and give me your instructions."

"I have decided. Invest the money, by all means, and let there be an end of it."

"And how do you wish me to invest it, Saxon?" asked Mr. Trefalden, with his pen in the ink.

"In the New Route, of course!"

"In one hundred pound shares, in the New Overland Route Steam-packet and Railway Company, Limited," said the lawyer, scribbling rapidly. "And to what amount?"

"To whatever amount you think proper."

"Shall we say to the extent of two millions?"

"Why only two? What is to be done with the rest?"

Mr. Trefalden stooped over his writing, and a keen observer might have seen that he changed colour.

"I do not recommend you," he said, "to invest more at present. As it is, you will be the largest shareholder on the list; and by-and-by, if the company should see fit to raise further capital, you can purchase additional shares. I must trouble you to sign this paper, Saxon—it is a power of attorney, which gives me authority to sell out your two millions."

The young fellow took his cousin's pen, and scrawled his name as carelessly as if he were signing away a couple of pounds.

"You ought never to subscribe your name to a paper without reading it," said Mr. Trefalden. "Remember that. By the way, Saxon, I shall see that you are entered as a director."

"As a director, if you please, then, who is not expected to do anything," replied Saxon, laughing. "Are you also a director?"

"No; I am only solicitor to the company. But now that our business is settled, would you not like to glance over these tables of estimates? Here, you see, is a plan of the Route, and here the probable cost per mile, including . . ."

"I beg your pardon, cousin William," interrupted Saxon, "but if our business is settled, I protest against hearing another word about the Route. For pity's sake, let us go out, and forget all about it!"

"I fear," said Mr. Trefalden, "that you are utterly incorrigible."

"I know I am. Do you ride?"

"Yes; now and then."

"Then we will go in search of the hunting party."

So Mr. Trefalden put his tables of estimates back into his pocket-book, and business was banished beyond recall. Then they went round to the stables, and Saxon ordered out his two thorough-breds.

"I trust you have not forgotten what I said to you at Reichenau on the subject of fetters, Saxon," said Mr. Trefalden, as they cantered across the park. "Mademoiselle Colonna is a dangerous neighbour. Beware of her."

Saxon laughed gaily.

"Fear nothing on my account, cousin William," said he. "I have the advantage of Achilles—there isn't a vulnerable point about me."

"We are all apt to think so till the arrow finds us out. However, if even your heart is safe, I still say beware—for your cheque-book. Has the signora levied no patriotic tax upon you yet?"

"None whatever."

"That's ominous, with a revolt actually in progress. She is reserving her strength, that the blow may fall the heavier when it comes. All I implore is, Saxon, that when Mademoiselle

Colonna, or her father, shall solicit your support, you will confine yourself to a money contribution—and pledge yourself to nothing foolish.”

“Of course not; but what else could I pledge myself to?”

“Heaven knows! She is capable of asking you to take the command of a troop.”

GERMAN OPERA AND ITS MAKERS.

IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

THE reason for returning to Gluck and for assigning him a place apart is to be given.

There is no man named in the golden book of musicians concerning whom so much learned nonsense has been written, as this King of opera composers; no one, the real quality and bearings of whose genius have been so much misunderstood. In this country, especially, ignorance on the subject has only been equalled by prejudice.

The facts of Gluck's life may be told in a paragraph. He was the son of a Bohemian forest-guard, born and trained in an atmosphere of wild national music. He received some education in Prague from masters whose names are little known (Czernahorsky's the best). He was at Vienna in the year 1736. When he was twenty years of age, he was taken over into Italy, by a patron whom he found there, Count Melzi, and was placed in the hands of Sammartini (one of the greatest theorists of his time). After writing eight Italian operas for Milan, Cremona, Venice, and Turin, he was invited to London during the disastrous year 1745. Failing to produce any effect here, he returned to Vienna, and wrote profusely for the Opera House of that capital, to Italian and French text, apparently making little advance till the year 1761. In that year Gluck produced his ballet “Dom Juan,” at Vienna, in the following year his “Orfeo,” and six years later “Alceste,” the famous dedication of which opera to the Grand-Duke of Tuscany, has caused more misapprehension, and done more mischief (this is saying much), than any dramatic preface of apology or attack in being—Victor Hugo's to his suppressed “Cromwell” not forgotten. How Gluck followed the fortunes of Marie Antoinette, whose music-master he had been—how invited by her to Paris, he there produced his two Iphigenias (“en Aulide” and “en Tauredon”) and his “Armida,”—how the tremendous battle ensued between the partisans of French and Italian opera, the philosophic and sensual connoisseurs, not, it may be, unwilling to mortify the Austrian Princess through her protégé, are matters familiar to every one who has looked into any history of modern Music, or any set of memoirs concerning the stormy feverish years which preceded the first Revolution. Let us look at the sequel. For upwards of ninety years, the five grand operas of Gluck have kept the stage. They are heard from time to time (even as are the great tragedies of Shakespeare), whenever adequate means of representation shall present themselves. The amount of weak and obsolete matter they contain is singularly

small: the amount of beauty and invention is difficult to overstate. It would puzzle the most grudging amateur who is afraid of enjoying three pleasures in place of two, to mention any other opera, one hundred years old, which can live its hundred nights in a modern theatre, as did “Orphée” a season or two ago in Paris, when it was revived for that matchless artist among modern singers:—Madame Viardot. Yet even her genius, great and creative as it is, could not have breathed life into what was essentially dead. Recollect, too, in these days of complication, when a Meyerbeer dare not trust his music without a multitude of characters, without the aid of ice-ballets and processions, and a pageantry demanding cost and care, and incessant renewal, to keep its splendours in order—that for the presentation of “Orphée” sufficed, three women—one only demanded to be a great actress—supported by a chorus. Hundreds of musical compositions have been written in praise of Music; Handel's “Cecilian Ode,” and “Alexander's Feast,” and the superb concert-scene in “Solomon,” among the number, but this Opera of Gluck on the remote and hackneyed Greek legend towers above them all. Think of that grave and melancholy opening chorus at the tomb—the first song of Orpheus with Echo, “Objet de mon amour,” the melody of which, with its three-bar rhythm, clearly suggested to Mozart Susanna's admired air “Deh! vieni non tardar,” in Figaro. Think of the scene with the Furies and Spirits of Death, in which the singer, inspired by Love, breaks the rampart of Hate and Oblivion, by pleadings potent enough to draw

Iron tears down Pluto's cheek.

Think of that even more wonderful scene in the Elysian fields “of asphodel,” where the gliding shades pass by Orpheus, while he questions every face in the agony of hope. Think of that chorus of unseen voices which thrills every nerve, when at last the hand of Eurydice is placed in that of her rescuer (the most intense, yet gentlest, supernatural effect in music). Think of that last burst of despair over the body of the rescued bride, delivered again to Death, in punishment for the disobedience of him to whom she has been reunited. Whether any stage music which depends on truth of expression, giving free scope to the highest and deepest genius of the executant, can be found to exceed, or even to equal, this in simple, symmetrical beauty, may be doubted.

It would be pleasant to pass through the other four classical operas of Gluck, in order to specify the resistless power, the vigorous fancy, the firm control of that demon of extravagance, which, under pretext of originality, has led so many a good man astray, were this the place for minute criticism, or cumulative evidence. What if we were to claim him as one of the school of Purcell? Gluck told Burney—a witness whose facts have never been once overthrown—that he had been led to study the expression, heretofore wanting in his works, during his sojourn in England; and that, under the conditions of his painful rivalry with Handel (who, too, had mas-

tered England's traditions), he had found that for every work of art which is to last there must be a basis, not dependent on humour, not dependent on fashion, but on truth, which shall endure till art shall be no more. Thus much for England—while it may be remarked, that in all this body of grand music we find only one slight trace of German humour, and this where Gluck's idolators, who have been used chiefly to consider him as a master of dramatic declamation, will be the least prepared to receive it—in his treatment of the orchestra. Different from that of Bach—different from that of Haydn—unobtrusive, timid, it may be said, as compared with the violent delights of modern times—care and originality are still to be recognised, which remove Gluck's five great operas from close kindred with the slight Italian productions fabricated for singers, written about the same time, "the place of which knoweth them no more." Great as is the effect produced by grouping the instruments of the full band, which we owe to Mozart, as having perfected Haydn's inventions, the contrast of a solitary tone, again and again presented in Gluck's accompaniments, is as remarkable and as eminently worthy of study as any of the experiments of Bach, or the felicitous combinations of the composer of "Don Giovanni."

A word more is to be said concerning the man. Those who have clung to the precepts laid down in his famous preface to "Alceste," setting forth how Gluck bent himself to fight to the death against the absurdities of singers' music, with its concessions to the vanity of the interpreter, and against the ignorance of the audience who would have their ears tickled by irrational repetitions of a flattering phrase (whether pertinent or senseless, what mattered it?), have failed to remember that Gluck conceded just as largely as every one of those whom he attacked—more largely than some among them. To give an instance—the bravura at the end of the first act of his "Orfeo," a piece of singers' effect, does not belong to Gluck, but was written by Bertoni (one of "those Italians") for Guadagni, the original Orfeo, nevertheless it was adopted by Gluck, when the opera was presented in Paris, for the display of M. Legros, the then hero. So, too, in "Alceste," the air for Hercules was patched in by Gossec, and lazily adopted by Gluck. And in this very "Alceste," as elsewhere, it may be seen that Gluck *could* and *did* return (*da capo*) to his first phrase on the words of the situation! How long will artists profess to be ashamed of what they connive at, and, in poor pretext at originality, preach doctrines which they themselves forget, for ever and ever, when it is convenient? "My dear sir," said Horace Walpole to Hogarth, when he began to talk of his system, "you grow wild. I take my leave of you." The composers could be named by scores who have cited this "Alceste" preface as containing the doom of form, regularity, and melody,—thus reducing vocal music to a mere noted declamation of the words; forgetting how entirely different were theory and practice in

the case of the writer. There can be no doubt that Gluck's reputation has suffered by it, especially in this country, where a perpetual comparison is made betwixt him and Mozart, one of England's chiefest musical idols.

And did not idolatry breed uncharitable and narrow bigotry, every one would gladly contribute his quota of sympathy to the apotheosis of the composer in whose works the balance of perfect form and beauty is more uniformly maintained than in those of any other musician. To say a word which may seem like the mildest qualification of enthusiasm on the subject of Mozart is to risk bitter contempt and reproof. A remark or two must nevertheless be made in reference to the subject in hand; the forms and peculiarities of German opera. Towards establishing these, the fascinating composer did less than he has the reputation of having done. No artist so eclectic as Mozart had ever so strong a manner of his own. The extent of his obligations to his predecessors and contemporaries has never been fully admitted; perhaps because everything that he borrowed and appropriated underwent a process of transmutation which amounted to a change of identity. There was no great master unknown to him—none to whom he was not indebted. To Bach, as may be seen in the duet of armed men in the "Zauberflöte;" to Handel, whose "Messiah," as retouched by him, affords one of the most felicitous examples of taste, reverence, and science in existence; to Haydn in his symphonic forms; to Gluck in his effects—as for instance the supernatural blasts accompanying the speech of the statue in the cemetery, which were clearly anticipated in the oracle scene in "Alceste." Yet this was consistent with a fertility as distinguished from variety of invention, with a grasp of science eminently singular in one so much of whose life was passed in careless gaiety. Probably so perfect a musical organisation was never given to human being. Mozart had memory, he had executive facility, he had creative power, at a moment's command, being foremost in the exercise of an art now all but lost, that of improvisation. He had that exquisite refinement which gives the highest finish to the work, whatever it be, without overloading or enfeebling the same. One cannot call to mind a vulgar bar from his pen, and few ugly ones—the much-discussed opening of his sixth-stringed quartet dedicated to Haydn, excepted. He had force at his command, too, whenever he cared to put it forth. The most evenly composed throughout of any opera in the world is the "Figaro," the first finale of which as a piece of construction, with melody pervading every note of it, is unparagoned. Yet, is it possible to hear "Figaro," in these days, without a feeling of satiety; as if we had been steeped in sentimental emotion, where mirth and irony were wanted? That which has been said of Figaro's great soliloquy in the play, that it had a deep political under meaning, will not avail us here. It was not a serious love-tale which Mozart set himself

to tell: so much as one of airy wit and cunning intrigue, of very little passion and very much jealousy. His people are all in intense earnest. His Countess could protest no more tenderly than she does were hers a case of real fascination, not merely a half-compassionating fancy to listen to the foolish page. His Cherubino's love-songs might be put into the mouth of Romeo, without shaming the sincerity of Juliet's lover. And his Susanna, while tricking the Count, is as serious over the game, as her master is over his discreditable pursuit. Compare this music with that to a setting of Beaumarchais's earlier play, into which something of young romance and love do enter, "Il Barbiere." Recollect that for years Signor Rossini was scouted as flimsy and superficial, whereas to breathe a whisper in criticism of Mozart, amounted to positive blasphemy. Yet in Signor Rossini's exquisite comedy every character is characterised by the music allotted to it, in Mozart's sentimental drama—*not*.

The above vein of observation could be wrought out through all Mozart's musical dramas. Even in the opera which Beethoven declared was his only German work, "Die Zauberflöte," when the temple music is set aside (not, by the way, so rich and grave in its solemnity as that of Gluck's "Alceste" and "Iphigenie"), it is not easy to decide what was meant by the maker in matter of humour. The Queen of Night, whom we are invited to believe is in a predicament of wrath, or passion, or distress, "tops up" her lamentations with bravura passages of heartless and mechanical display, such as might have been written by a Galuppi, or a Ciampi, for the Gabrielli or Bastardella of the minute;—and hence that fairy extravaganza, or masonic mystery (which is it?), of "The Magic Flute" remains, and will remain to the end of time, with some of us (on the stage), a heavy and fatiguing riddle, in spite of the luxury of beauty which it contains. In the concert-room, where there is no thought of sequence and connexion, the matter is different. It is this power to charm of Mozart's music, when removed from beyond the boundaries of the world for which it was written, which has led those who feel rather than distinguish, to enthrone him as the greatest of stage-composers that ever lived.

How much of this symmetrical yet sometimes irrational fluency of beauty may be ascribed to the musician's training, who shall decide? Taking the position of many who have made music in Germany into account, Mozart was favourably circumstanced in his childhood. His father was a pious, sensible man; too willing (as is the way with parents) to push forward and produce the boy's prodigious genius; more, however, from the pride of love than from wishing to make merchandise of it. His mother was a faithful, affectionate woman. The court of the Prince-Bishop of Salzburg, against the tyrannies of which biographers have been apt to rave, appears to have been, its time considered, a safe and creditable residence as compared with other German courts, the

coarse and brutal sensuality of which required nothing less than a political earthquake for their cleansing. We can gather from Mozart's letters (a strange medley of shrewdness, domestic affection, musical foresight and insight, and sensual coarseness) that his education cannot have been neglected. He was a good linguist, a fair mathematician. To one of his peculiar temperament, however, the career of precocious exhibition and wandering into which he was launched, when quite a child, could hardly fail to prove fatal,—as exhausting youth, sapping the foundations of self-denial, developing every appetite and passion, substituting flattery for truth, familiarising the youth with luxuries belonging to other worlds than his own. How far a more *bracing* education, not severer (for severe must be the toil of any Prodigy who would keep up the excitement of curiosity), might have modified the master's music, adding to it nerve, without any loss of beauty, and something more of thought, which means something less of manner—how, had his life, every hour of which he lived (draining pleasure and labour to the dregs), begun later, it might have lasted longer—are speculations which will tantalise those who study art in connexion with character, and which, though impossible to be solved, are not wholly profitless. Meanwhile, the certain wonder is, that in Mozart's brief and feverish life he could achieve so much (let us range it where and how we may), which will last as long as a note of music is to be heard in the world.

It would not be easy, it may be repeated, to name a musician, in whom with such boundless versatility so much manner is combined, as in the case of Mozart. Accordingly, never had master a larger school of imitators, unless, perhaps, it was Raphael in painting. Betwixt the genius of the two men there seems to be a great affinity. But the mass of the Mozartian music left, whether in the form of instrumental, or sacred, or theatrical composition, is of a depressing and regular mediocrity, to which only one fate could happen. To confine ourselves to opera, there can be little question that Winter, perhaps the most significant of the company, whose earlier efforts are quite forgotten, on returning to Vienna from Italy in 1794, endeavoured to catch the mantle of the deceased poet. Till lately his forty-fourth opera, "The Interrupted Sacrifice," existed in the theatres of Germany; and we have not altogether forgotten the "Proserpine," which he wrote for London, in display of Mrs. Billington and Signora Grassini. But the level stateness and correct suavity of this music (representative of that which German chapel-masters manufactured by the yard) can be no longer endured; and it is not to be wondered at, that by those who mistook the reverse of wrong for right—that easiest of moral processes—the rejection of that, which, however accurately made, however classic in its pretensions, is essentially so devoid of life, soul, and spirits, should hurry on that movement in German opera music, the end of which (though we are already on the very confines of chaos) has yet to come.

Thus, admirable as is Mozart's genius in itself, the influence which it exercised on the school of German opera writers, who gathered round and succeeded him, was not to the promotion of individuality. Though he may be said to have displaced the slighter Italian writers, his followers planted nothing in the place of their works half as worthy, because half as genuine. It was not till fifteen years after his death that the mightiest genius who ever appeared in the world of orchestral music made that sign, which, misunderstood and neglected as it was at the time, nevertheless clearly marked the point at which German opera parted company from the Italian musical drama. This was Beethoven—in his solitary dramatic effort—"Fidelio."

The strange, sad story of this remarkable man's life has never been—never will be—completely told. None were about him in his early days who seem to have comprehended the mixture of ruggedness and tenderness in his nature; still less to have fathomed the existence in his genius of a bolder originality than ever musician before or since his time manifested. Those early days had not passed when the wall which was to separate him from the rest of his kind began to rise—at first merely as a mist; but becoming more and more solid, till, at last, it was round about and above him, like an inexorable prison. A more fearful trial is hardly to be imagined than the consciousness of steadily-increasing deafness to a musician. The tendency to morose suspicion which peculiarly belongs to that infirmity was increased by every circumstance of his position. On the one side, patronised by persons of quality, and courted by women to whom his extravagances only made him more precious (Orson being notoriously as fascinating as Adonis); on the other, preyed on by a despicable, dishonest set of relations, Beethoven seems to have stood in singular need of that calm, solid, self-sacrificing friendship which might have smoothed his asperities, and set his daily life in order. In music, however, there was no chance of one so peculiar and so vehement finding a counsellor. For, in defiance of all those silly rhapsodists, who have mapped out his life and writings into "periods," by way of showing their own ingenuity, it may be asserted that, in the very first instrumental works published by Beethoven—his first solo and concerted sonatas—an originality declares itself, at once separating him from the school of artists so largely influenced (and not to their good) by Mozart's fascinating beauty. Perhaps, with the spirit of invention so strong and so genuine as his, there must be combined something of antagonism; with consciousness of so much power, a spice of prejudice and exaction. It is certain that with Beethoven began that injustice to the voice, its uses, and accomplishments, which is one of the distinctive peculiarities of German, as distinguished from Italian, opera. While the characteristics of every instrument were carefully studied and brought out to a high relief unknown before—the orchestra being by him invested with an amount of descriptive

and expressive power, till then undreamed of—it was decreed that since vocal accomplishments had been misused by the writers of the Italian school, by way of securing truth to scenic representation, they were thenceforward things to be disparaged as something meretricious, having no value. One convention virtually replaced another, under pretext of ridding musical drama from convention, and one branch of executive art was displaced and allowed to fall into decay. That Beethoven's writing for the single voice was often harsh, impure, and uninteresting (supposing the singer's part separated from the accompaniment), will hardly be denied by any impartial student. The meagerness and common-place of his vocal melodies—as compared with the phrases in his instrumental works—which set the ear on the alert, is alike remarkable and gratuitous, or rather the consequence, of a system based on bigotry and prejudice. It is observable, that when he did try for vocal charm, as in his "Adelaida"—as in the tune on which the last movement of his Choral Symphony was based—it was only (as his sketch-books make clear) by reiterated and painful efforts that he arrived at the melody. There is not a song by him, and he wrote many, that has become a household word.

Yet, all this allowed for, it is impossible to over-estimate Beethoven's vigour and genius in dealing with the stage. There is nothing more suggestive, more pungently characteristic, than certain of his theatrical inspirations,—as, for instance, the delicious Dervish chorus in his "Ruins of Athens," the Hungarian chorus and dance in "King Stephen" (the airy beauty of which has never been exceeded), and what is less known in England—far less than it deserves—the incidental music to "Egmont." In point of character, there are only two numbers in "Fidelio" which equal these—the Prisoner's chorus, and the gravedigging duet in the prison vault.

A study, note by note, of that wonderful opera, would not be lost labour;—beginning with the excellent simplicity of the story, which sets aside all established rule, and yet produces an effect matchless in its power to move. Now-a-days, the playwright who only allowed his principal male character to appear when the drama was half over, and then in merely one scene of action, would be put to the door ignominiously by the musician. Yet this is the case in "Fidelio." Then the opera is unique in another point—the stagnation, or rather almost utter cessation of motion during the two scenes of elaborate combination with which both of the acts close. So fatal has this been found in Mozart's case, that a similar scene, rich in musical beauty, which closes "Don Giovanni," has, by common consent, been omitted, as forming an anticlimax. Further, it may be said, regarding "Fidelio," that it is the orchestra and the situation which make the effect in the three principal songs—those of the faithful Leonora, the villainous Pizarro, and of Florestan in his dungeon—not the melody or the singer. The heroine, in truth, is so hemmed round and chained in by an instrumental accompaniment

of an extreme difficulty, as to be denied anything like that freedom of action and emphasis which has so large a share in the charm of operatic personation. In the raging song of Pizarro, the vigour of the movement lies in the whirling fermenting phase given to the orchestra. In the closing part of the prison scene of Florestan there is a breathless yearning attempted, which cannot be fully expressed without placing the singer in eminent peril of exaggeration. There is no reason, save in the perversity of intention, why in these monologues the declaimer should have been so hampered and sacrificed. It will be seen, as we go on, to what convenient uses, as concealing want of study, and want of invention, these have been turned as a precedent by the German opera writers;—who, to use the jargon of the day, have taken Beethoven as “point of departure,”—and have fancied themselves inheritors of his genius, while in reality they have been merely adopting some of his practices, which are, to say the least of them, open to question by sound judgment.

Taken, however, for better for worse, with the most clear recognition of its peculiarities, not to say defects, “Fidelio” remains, and will remain so long as the stage lasts, as the type of German opera, the first and the most complete work of its school. It is impossible to hear it fairly executed, by singers having requisite physical energy, and by an orchestra competent to do justice to the score, without being carried away;—and only on afterthought will it suggest itself that the effect lies on the story, and on the symphonic combinations of the instruments, rather than on such might to move by the setting of sounds to words as Gluck put into the mouth of his Orpheus, his Armida, his Clytemnestra, his Alceste, his Iphigenia, and his Orestes.

A ROMANTIC EXISTENCE.

Is a boyish rage to roam,
Recklessly I fled from home,
But whither should my footsteps bend,
What might chance to be the end
Of the vagrant outbreak, ne'er
Heart or mind had wish or care.
Heedless rambler I became,
But, to wound a noble name,
That I would not:—so the page
Rich in a lofty lineage
Stainless is, whate'er my shame,
For the Rover changed his name.

Was the Rover happy?—Yes,
In that sort of happiness
Licence and hot blood engender,
Till the reason makes surrender,
And the tyrant will commands
Soul and body—heart and hands.

Lustily I joined the cheer
Of the eager Buccaneer,
When, from topmast first descried,
“Land!” exultingly was cried:
For around the tropic isles
Fortune on the Rover smiles,

Where Galléon, deep in freight
Of merchandise and “piece of eight”
To the Buccaneer must strike
In conflict close of boarding-pike.

Lovely were the Tropic isles—
We had more than Fortune’s smiles,
For the ill-got gold to spill
In profusion, vicious still,
Was our wont—and golden show’rs
Harvests bring of gleesome hours:—
Gleesome hours that cost us years
Of after shame, remorse, and tears.

’Twas in *one* remoter place
Where the wild untutor’d grace
Of nature and of woman reign’d,
That a milder mood we feign’d,
Laid our ship down to careen,
Safe within the leafy screen
Of a richly wooded creek:—
There, in safety, might we seek
Brief repose, until again
The bark repaired should cleave the main.

A lovely and unwarlike race
Dwelt in that sequester’d place,
Whose forests deep of solemn quiet
Repressed the very thought of riot.
How the sultry solitude
While it yielded joy, subdued!
All that fruits of tropic splendour
To the parched throat could render,
All that fragrant shade could yield
From the torrid heat to shield,
Gave a sort of drowsy pleasure
We indulged in without measure.
Gorgeous shrubs of various dye
In wild profusion charm’d the eye,
Bright birds flitted thro’ their stems,
Like a flight of winged gems,
But voiceless all—as tho’ they chose
Not to break the sweet repose.

Such a reign of beauty round us,
In a soft enchantment bound us,
And the magic of that spot
Tempted me to leave it not;
But the soft temptation pass’d:—
’Twas my fate!—my lot I cast
With the vicious and the vile—
Could I ever hope to smile?
Laugh I might—the empty laugh
Of ribald revellers while they quaff,
But the smile that sweetly tells
The joy that in the bosom dwells,
Never, never, may appear
On the lip of Buccaneer!

Off and on we came to seek
Shelter in our favourite creek,
With some dashing cruise between
The visits to our leafy screen.
Tho’ I never chose to brag
Of our dreaded Sable Flag,
Still, that terror of the main
Never brought my bosom pain;
Never in the heady fight
Did my torpid conscience smite;
Hand to hand, and shot for shot,
Good as that we gave, we got;
That I flinch’d not from;—but when
The councils fierce of murd’rous men
In dev’lish mood, brought torture dark
Within their hellish code, the spark

Of pity that so long had slept
 Into a flame of fury leapt,
 And scorched my heart to madness!—I
 Denounc'd such felon infamy
 With scathing words—till many a knife
 Was brandish'd 'gainst my threaten'd life;
 I brav'd them all—shot down the chief,
 And then, with 'passion'd speed—more brief
 Than words that tell it—headlong gave
 My body to the surging wave.
 Swift as I swam, the bullets swifter
 Came pelting round:—a deadly snifter!
 But harmlessly the bullets sped—
 'Tis a small mark, a swimmer's head—
 Ere long the leaden storm was o'er,
 And, nearly spent, I reach'd the shore.

How I did the snake escape
 In the densely-tangled brake,
 How the alligator pass
 Thro' the treacherous morass,
 And the panther in his lair,
 Marvellous to tell it were,
 But vain the wondrous tale—suffice,
 I struck the coast by Barcobeice
 (One of the fabled El Dorados),
 And found a bark bound to Barbadoes.

On board—and 'scaped the danger dread
 That hung around me—my poor head
 Gave way to fever's racking raid—
 By turns I curs'd, by turns I pray'd;
 In darksome dream I saw the meek
 Old visage of the good Cacique
 In placid courage all unmov'd,
 While, murder'd round him, those he lov'd.
 And then a lovelier face would seem
 To watch me in my troubled dream;
 But soon Cacique and Princess flew
 O'er seas of blood in swift canoe,
 And when I woke, a cherub face,
 Resplendent with its mother's grace,
 My languid eye beheld with joy—
 Yes!—I had saved my darling boy!

Pass we o'er some gaps of time;
 I had fled the tropic clime,
 Had seen (unknown) my natal hall,
 Silent and desolated all,
 Its stalwart sons had withered fast,
 Of all its race I was the last,
 And strange emotions inly burned
 Within the Prodigal returned,
 And early lessons crowding came
 To bow my harden'd heart to shame:—
 No father, with forgiving eye
 To weep upon my neck was nigh;—
 No—he had died—nor knew his son
 Repented of the evil done.

Should I the bonds of mystery burst
 And prove myself the heir?—At first
 I shrank from such ordeal dread—
 Better, by far, be rumoured "dead,"
 Than known to live, and living, be
 The mark of odious obloquy;—
 For rumours o'er the sea had sped
 Of wicked life by Rover led:—
 Oh! when did rumour ever fail
 To propagate an ugly tale!

Still, for my boy's sake to retain
 My lineal rights, whate'er the pain
 To me, was duty;—so I gave
 All scruple to the winds—and brave

In love parental—forth I stood,
 And needed all my hardihood,
 To meet the looks of dull suspicion,
 The jeering lip of cold derision,
 When in the open Court I sued
 Before the Bench, my rights of blood.
 Methought a sickening echo sped
 Throughout the hall when "blood" I said;
 Or were they many whispers vile
 That hiss'd the word thro' scoffing smile?

Deep was the shade upon the brow
 Of the stern Judge, in asking how
 I dare adventure claim for one
 All unentitled, tho' my son;
 No proof of marriage rite I gave—
 The ancient line of Bar-de-luy
 Might never represented be
 By offspring of some Indian slave.

High swell'd my heart—and forth I said
 "Simple the rite by which I wed
 No Indian slave—no menial thing,
 My bride was daughter of a king,
 The Princess of a distant coast:—
 No Christian rite, 'tis true, they boast
 In that far land;—but simply taking
 Each other's hand is marriage-making,
 And sprinkled flow'rs above the head,
 Declare the plighted lovers wed:—
 The rite is all-sufficient, sure,
 Which custom in each land makes pure,
 And ne'er before cathedral shrine
 Was marriage vow more pure than mine!"

Then did a shout indignant burst
 Throughout the hall.—"He is accurst!"
 The crowd exclaim'd: "In Pagan lands
 He has abjured his God's commands
 And here a Christian people braves
 With impious words!"—The lifted staves
 Of the Court's officers alone,
 Preserved my life from staff and stone,
 And, 'midst the uproar wild, a cry,
 Rang in my ears, "Fly, father, fly!"

It was my boy's—how came he there
 I knew not—but his childish pray'r
 Imparted childish fear to me—
 I'd sooner dared and died, than flee
 Th' ignoble crowd before he spoke,
 But now, parental fear awoke
 Within my heart for that dear child,
 Amidst a multitude so wild;
 I clasped him close and rush'd away,
 Lest his young life should fall a prey
 To the demoniac crowd, whose yell
 Rang in my ears like blasts from hell.
 Forth through a secret panel, known
 To few but me, we swiftly passed,
 Behind me a fierce curse I cast
 Upon the mob, whose prey was flown.
 My shallop's topsail caught the wind,
 Laden with shouts of foes behind,
 But less and less the outcry grew,
 As o'er the lake the shallop flew.

Straight for Skalkragga's isle I steer'd,
 It was a spot devoutly fear'd;
 Of evil fame—although to me
 In boyhood known familiarly
 (For I was ever prone to run
 To wild adventure others shun),
 And in that isle, above the flood
 In stalagmitic grandeur stood

A cavern deep of ample dome,
A fitting spot for outlaw's home.
For, known to few, 'twas seldom near'd,
And by the few 'twas known, 'twas fear'd.

So fear'd, so dark, so lone a place,
Well suited was to blink a chase;
There all unharm'd the wild fowl flew,
There all unseen the lilies grew
In cloister'd beauty on the wave
That rippled through that lonely cave,
While lofty rushes rose between,
And made an ample waving screen
Which, as it rustled to the wind,

Whisper'd of safety and repose
To hunted fugitive who'd find
A shelter sure from furious foes,
So, thro' the tangled flowery zone
I burst into that cavern lone,
There, passion-torn and sore distress'd,
My lov'd child clasping to my breast,
Lulled by the ripples of the deep,
Exhausted I lay down to sleep.

But not for long was slumber granted,
On my shoulder roughly laid
A hand awoke me; for my blade
I vainly grasp'd, and struggling panted,
An Amazon it was who broke
My spell of sleep, and thus she spoke
(Strange words to fall from beauty's daughter),
"Sir, I have brought your shaving water,
Get up at once or you'll be late,
The train you go by leaves at eight."

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE OF SUNDAY.

MORALS, like climate and the growth of fruits, seem to be ruled, in certain respects, by the parallels of latitude and longitude.

I will instance the morality of Sabbath observance. Between the 54th and 59th degree of north latitude, that is to say, between John o' Groat's house and the boundary line which divides England from Scotland, it is considered contrary to good morals and religion to play musical instruments on Sunday, or to sing any songs but sacred ones. Within these parallels of latitude, whistling on Sunday is downright impiety. Get into a train bound for the south, and in two hours' time you will have left the whistling parallel behind you. You may whistle now on Sunday; you may sing what songs you please; you may play the fiddle, nay, you may even dance, and few will challenge your pleasure. It is but a twelve hours' journey from Edinburgh to London. At six o'clock in the morning you are whistling over your breakfast in Princess-street, and the Scotch lassie in attendance is horrified. At six o'clock in the evening you are listening to the band in the Regent's Park, and thousands of English lasses are there, dressed in all their best, promenading up and down to the time. If you were to bring the Scotch lassie up and show her this scene, horns blowing, drums beating, and ten thousand couples sweet-hearting under the trees, she would draw in her breath and exclaim, "Eh, gude be here,

did ever any body see the like—playing polkas on Sunday! I wonder whaur they expect to gang to!"

But now, in turn, take an English person over with you to Paris, move him from where the longitude is 0 to the 6th parallel east, and he will be as much shocked to see the Parisians going to the theatre on Sunday evening, as the Scotch lassie was to see the Londoners promenading in the Regent's Park and listening to polkas. A few degrees of latitude make a difference one way; a few degrees of longitude, make a difference another. Go north, and you mustn't whistle; come south, and you may play the fiddle; move sideways, a little towards the east, and you may whistle, play the fiddle, and go to the play.

Which parallel rules the right morality in this matter I will not pretend to decide. I will candidly admit that I have never been able to come to a conclusion which wholly satisfies myself; because, in all the three cases I have stated, I have found inconsistencies and anomalies, which do not in any case harmonise, either with the rigid idea of the Mosaic law of the Sabbath, or with the more modern and liberal interpretation of the Sunday. It is not my intention to deliver judgment; but merely to sum up the evidence as it has been offered before me in Scotland, England, and France.

I was born in Scotland, and I had experience of the Scotch Sunday first. Sunday has two aspects in Scotland—a comparatively mild one in the country, and a superlatively severe one in the towns. In the thinly populated rural parishes, there is but one kirk, and there is but one Sunday service. Some of the parishioners come from great distances to attend the service. The poor parishioners trudge on foot, carrying sprigs of southernwood between the leaves of their Bibles; the rich parishioners—the lairds and well-to-do farmers—make the journey in their carriages and dog-carts. In these country parishes, Sunday is the grand reunion day of the week, when friends and distant neighbours meet together at the church door, after service, to inquire after each other's health, and talk about the cows and the sheep and the crops. These friendly gatherings round the kirk door are almost as much a part of the Christian duty of the day as the service itself. They are anticipated with pleasure, and they are thoroughly enjoyed. The journey to and from kirk in the country occupies a great portion of the day. The parishioners who live at a distance must start pretty early to get to the kirk by noon; and when the service is over, it takes them some considerable time to get back to their homes and their mutton broth. Thus the fore part of the day is actively occupied, and the hours pass away cheerfully enough. The great blank in the Sunday life ensues in the afternoon. There is no service to go to, and amusements are strictly forbidden. You mustn't read newspapers or profane books; and among profane books you must include the Waverley Novels; you mustn't play at any game;

you mustn't sing, except psalm and hymn tunes; you mustn't whistle, even to call a dog; and you are taught that it is Sabbath-breaking to go out for a walk in the fields. There is nothing left for you (unless you have an insatiable appetite for "good books"—and it is sometimes quite as hard to read good books as it is to read bad ones) but to mope and lounge and idle, and imagine vain things. I am sadly afraid that there are more vain things imagined in the rural districts of Scotland on a Sunday afternoon, than on all the other days of the week put together. I was required to repeat a dozen verses of a hymn or psalm every Monday morning at school. I could not understand why Monday was selected for this exercise of my memory. I think I understand it now. Our schoolmaster, knowing what a vacuous time Sunday afternoon was, gave us this task—no doubt with the best intentions—to occupy our thoughts, and perhaps kill the miserable hours.

But I don't think I loved the Sunday afternoon better for having that hymn to learn. Indeed, I am sure I loved it less. I can well remember what the farm servants, and the labourers, and poor cottagers, did on Sunday afternoon. They lounged, and lolled, and smoked their pipes, and slept, and yawned, and stretched themselves, and wished to their hearts it were Monday. The thud of the flails in the barn was always to be heard earlier on Monday morning than on any other morning. Monday was a day of deliverance, when the bondsmen rose early to enjoy their freedom, and relieve themselves with a little whistling. I remember a wicked boy, called Peter, who, possessed by the devil, lay awake one Sunday night until it struck twelve, when he sat up in his bed and whistled Tullochgorum; having finished the tune his heart was relieved, and he immediately lay down and went to sleep. We all groined under the gloomy restraints of Sunday—but inwardly. We did not complain nor revolt in words; for it seemed to all of us that we had imbibed the Scotch Sabbatarianism with our mother's milk, and that it was part of our nature. I well remember how conscience-stricken I was one Sunday, when I caught myself beginning to whistle the Laird of Cockpen, which I had been learning the day before to play on the fiddle. On another occasion I did a very dreadful thing—something more dreadful than whistling the Laird of Cockpen—though it was merely an inadvertence. It was sacrament Sunday, and there was a great preaching going on in the kirk. Three or four ministers preached, one after the other. After the second sermon I was mercifully let off. I went for a walk and strolled down to the little burn where I was accustomed on lawful week-days to fish for trout. What possessed me to do it, I don't know; but finding in my pocket a piece of string, and in the collar of my jacket a pin, I bent the latter, attached it to the string, and, covering the extemporised hook with a worm, began to fish for minnows. It is more than twenty years since this occurred, yet I can distinctly and vividly

remember every little particular. I can see the shoal of little silvery fishes swarming round the worm; I can feel the tug at the hook. I see the beguiled minnow wriggling for a moment in the air, and now lying flapping and gasping on the bank. The first tug at the hook was an electric shock that went straight to my conscience. When I saw the minnow on the bank, I was stricken with horror. I had been fishing on Sunday, and the desecration was complete, for I had caught a fish! I took up the evidences of my guilt, hid them hastily among some tall grass, and fled as if I had committed a murder. The remembrance of that crime was present with me for many a day, and afterwards when I went out to fish at lawful times, I always avoided the awful spot where I had caught the minnow on a Sunday.

The superlatively severe aspect of the Scotch Sunday is to be witnessed chiefly in the villages and small towns. There, the flock all live together in one narrow fold, within call of the shepherd. The bells ring to kirk three times a day, with prayer-meetings and Sunday-schools between whiles. From morning to night it is incessant preaching, and praying, and psalm-singing. It is a long day of unremitting religious exercise. The sound of a piano in one of these little towns would mark out the abode of a heathen; a hot dinner would be a breach of the commandment; laughter would be a profanity. There are many who conscientiously believe that it is their duty to keep the Sabbath in this manner; but there are many others to whom the day, its observances and discomforts, are an intolerable burden. They revolt against it in their hearts, but they dare not break the chain that binds them to the custom. In many families and in many communities in Scotland, man is made for the Sabbath.

When you come south of the parallel 55 degrees north, you find an attempt to observe the Sabbath as if it were made for man. But it is only an attempt. It is a mere compromise, and I doubt if it be as honest and logical as the inexorable rigidity of Scotland. The bands in the Parks on Sunday afternoon may be taken as an assertion of the right of the people to amuse themselves on the Sabbath. But here it begins and here it ends. The government gives permission for bands to play in the Parks, but it declines to open the British Museum and the National Gallery on Sunday. Now, it seems to me that if the one be lawful so is the other. And I presume that there can be no question that museums and picture-galleries are as entertaining and as elevating as brass bands. Again: the English approve of bands on the Sunday, but not of operas. Where is the difference?

Move longitudinally, yet laterally, a little to the east, and we find Sunday in Paris almost the busiest day of the week. The work of pleasure is in full swing, and pleasure is as exacting and as inexorable a business as any business. Without attempting to define or settle the scope of the law of the Sabbath, I feel certain that prejudice

and habit have a great share in forming our views with regard to it. This strikes me at once when I am spending a Sunday in Paris. When I was in Scotland, I "sounded an alarm to my conscience" on a Sunday morning with a bar or two of the Laird of Cockpen. When I become a resident in London, my conscience in course of time lets me go to hear the bands in the Parks; but when I visit Paris for a week or two, I cannot even make up my mind to go to the theatre on Sunday. There are several things even here in England that I cannot reconcile myself to. I have no objection to music on a Sunday, but I have a notion that it is not right to dance on that day. I will laugh and chat, and tell stories and drink wine with you on a Sunday, but I will not play cards or billiards with you. Yet for the life of me I cannot logically maintain that it is more sinful to play cards or billiards (for simple amusement) than to tell stories and laugh. Indeed, perhaps there would be less harm in the game than in the idle talk. This prejudice, arising from habit and training, prevails on every hand.

I do not say that a band in the Park on Sunday afternoon is contrary to the law of the Sabbath, or that it is a bad thing in itself; but I do say that to concede this amusement, and this alone, is not to do the best that might be done towards providing national harmless entertainment for the people. Music by all means, if music is lawful; but let us have Museums too.

THE GREAT BEAR AND THE POLE STAR.

I AM a Pole, wicked enough to love my country, desiring to be her own free citizen, and doing what I may to sting the heel of foreign despotism till it lift itself from off me and my countrymen. God keep us all and always in that wickedness, though the czar may send us to Siberia, as he is now doing, despatching batches of us sometimes even twice a week! Why doesn't he try a Bartholomew massacre? Dead he may have us; living we can never be his. But in the way of banishment he does what he may to make a solitude and call it peace.

The families of the banished are not allowed to see them at the citadel; permission to be present at the departure of the train may be obtained from the railway station on the other side of the Vistula, in the suburb Praga; but how many steps must be taken to obtain such a permission! The supplicant must pass three different administrations, and in each he—or she—is received with a selection of those coarse words in which the Russian language is very rich. The soldiers, the aides-de-camp, the generals, abuse the "rebels who ought to be strung up together," and who dare to have love among themselves. Whoever gets a pass, must go to Praga the night before the departure, and before ten o'clock; after that hour no one may show himself in the streets.

The day of departure being fixed, the military

officers conceal it; but in spite of that, and in spite of the false dates with which they cause the public to be wearied, in spite, also, of the difficulties attending a stay on the other side of the river, by which the suspicions of the police are aroused; there are always many there—for the most part, women—who pass the long nights, while it freezes and blows, with a sad patience of love, under the walls of the station. The Russians do not allow them to go into the waiting-rooms. The morning passes away, but there are no exiles at the station. Perhaps tomorrow, perhaps the day after, perhaps at the end of the week, the hour may strike for the one last kiss of husband, father, brother, lover. Siberia gives none back. When the banishment takes place in the winter, five out of ten die on the journey; and shall the dear one go as if he were forgotten of his own kin, with no one to give him a warm blanket and the last few roubles? Sometimes these women guess the time by intuition, or buy the secret at a high price from the Russian officer on duty.

The first batch of prisoners is brought at day-break; but one can neither approach nor see them. Nothing is heard but the clicking of chains, and the blows of the soldiers with the butt-end of their guns; there the prisoners and their friends remain with a wall between them for more than three hours, until all the banished arrive at the station. Five minutes—only five minutes—before the departure, at the second signal of the locomotive, the gate opens. No woman present, nor scarcely any one, knows for certain whether she shall find her own among the banished. No one of the banished knows whether his sister, mother, wife, is there; whether any one in that crowd from which he is separated by the sentinels, is interested in him. From both sides one hears the calls of surnames and christian names; the voices are filled with all uncertainty, which changes into expressions of sharp grief, if the call remain without reply, or into a feverish melancholy joy, when a loved voice is heard. But there is no time for emotion. The exile must make his last will—for to all that he possesses he dies morally; he must give his last words of advice; and he must hurriedly take the scanty provisions for a journey of eternal farewell. And while this is doing, or being sought to be done, soldiers and sergeants, without any pity, take the banished by the shoulders and shove them into the carriages. The soldiers push the last delayers into the carriages, the train starts, and a dreadful cry rises from those who are left.

The carriages are of the fourth class, open, without windows, furnished only with curtains of serge. Each of the condemned carries a soldier's grey coat, made of pieces of stuff previously used in the service. The condemned forced to hard labour are chained two and two, men and women, and put into a special carriage.

A young lady, on the eve of being separated from her betrothed, threw herself under the wheels of the carriage of General Berg, and drew his attention. He allowed the marriage to

take place in the casemate of the citadel, and the young wife followed her husband to Siberia.

One day, a lady discovering her husband at the moment the train was starting, by her cries drew the attention of the banished one. "Only now!" cried the husband, with all the bitterness of grief and reproach. The woman threw herself at the feet of the station-master, beseeching him to stop the train for a minute. It was already gone, and the unhappy woman fell fainting on the platform. This happened in November, 1863; some months later, the Russians would not tolerate these farewells; a line of soldiers was placed between the carriages and the public, so that they who were taken, and they who were left, could not shake hands.

Tears were proscribed at Warsaw; mothers were forbidden to weep for the death of their children. My mother was not permitted to wear mourning for my young dead brother. The widow of one of our heroic chiefs, Sierakowski, who was shot, when near her confinement was transported in a cart to Siberia, and her child was condemned, before it was born, to be put with foundlings, if it were a male. Providence willed that it should not be, and blessed Madame Sierakowski with a daughter.

On my return from Stockholm, whither I had gone in the quality of political agent to the national government of Poland, I received an order from the national government to stop at Berlin, and to wait there until the place should be pointed out to me where I was to be employed next in my country's cause. I arrived at Berlin at the end of March, last year, and, having found a modest lodging in a by-street, lived there with a Swedish passport under a Swedish name, as a Swede, with a large blue umbrella.

I used to go sometimes and read the papers at the Café Spargnapani, which is in the most frequented part of Unter den Linden. A throng of foreigners is always there, attracted by the journals of all countries. I often observed some Poles there, and from time to time a Russian spy—escorted, without his being aware of it, by an agent of security of the national Polish police. My own safety needing the greatest reserve, I shunned all association with the other readers, and, not to betray my nationality, I read the papers of every country except Poland and Russia.

One morning, the commissary of the Polish national government came to me at my lodgings, looking aghast, and informed me that the Grand-Duke Constantine, younger brother of the Emperor of Russia, was to pass through Berlin on his way to St. Petersburg, and that two persons, formerly Russian officers, but lately in the service of the Polish insurrection (for we had many deserters from the imperial army), intended to make an attempt on the life of the grand-duke, in order to avenge the unjust death of three of their best comrades, whom he had shot upon his arrival in Poland. The story seemed to me incredible, but the detailed account of one of our agents in whom I had full confidence, left me no doubt that the attempt was really projected.

Let me notice here, that I had been myself charged, in 1863, to seek authority from the national government of Warsaw for the seizure of the grand-duke, when he was returning from the Crimea by way of the Danube, Pesth, and Vienna.

We were really in consternation. To allow the attempt to succeed (and that, if made, it would succeed, there was little doubt) would have been to afford to the enemies of Poland the opportunity of belying us to the utmost content of their hearts. On the other hand, what were we to do in order not to betray the two Russians, who, after all, were, according to their own notion, acting in our interest, and who yet concealed themselves from us, though, happily, we knew them by sight. It was requisite, moreover, for the Polish national organisation in Berlin not to betray itself, while it was using every exertion to prevent the attempt. We were, as they say in France, between the hammer and the anvil. For three consecutive days, all the public-houses in Berlin, all the theatres, all the numerous casinos, were passed in review; but of our officers no trace could be found. They were in Berlin. At length, on the fourth day, at about two o'clock in the afternoon, just as I was coming out of a café with a fellow-countryman, a coach passed, and within it we perceived one of our heroes. We got instantly into another carriage and followed him. Our friend stopped at two different places; this we allowed, as it was necessary to learn his comrade's address; but what was our amazement when he alighted at the Russian embassy!

I followed him, to see whether he entered as an habitué, or as a mere stranger. I arrived at the porter's lodge just as the doorkeeper, profusely belaced, was saying to the officer: "Yes, sir, we expect his highness the grand-duke to-day, and he will leave for St. Petersburg at ten o'clock to-morrow evening."

Information certainly could not have been sought at a better source. We accosted the conspirator as he was coming away.

"Sir," I said to him in Russian, "you are such-and-such a person, and you have the design of assassinating the Grand-Duke Constantine at the moment of his departure for Russia. You will follow me immediately to the commissary of the national government of Poland, or I shall give myself up, with you, to the first Prussian constable."

He turned pale, and tried to rush into the coach; my companion was already seated there, so he saw the impossibility of escaping us. We proceeded to the Hôtel du Nord, where our commissary was sojourning, but that functionary had just gone out. We waited in his room for more than an hour, during which our conspirator was plunged in gloomy silence. At length the commissary arrived. The Russian—he was a young man twenty-four or twenty-five years of age, slim, fair, and pale—silently bit his moustache, and did not answer any of our questions. At last the commissary said to him, impatiently:

"Very well, sir, do not speak since it pleases you to keep silence. But you shall not leave this hotel for two days. I will have a room got ready for you next to mine, and one of these gentlemen will keep you company. As for you," he continued, addressing my friend, "you will allow your life to be taken, if it should be necessary, and you will not quit this gentleman one single step. If he should take to flight, have him arrested, and even have yourself arrested, as a Polish conspirator."

He rang the bell, and a waiter came; a room was asked for, and a porter to go to the station of the Dresden railway for the new comer's luggage. This was in order to give a semblance of truth to the improvised arrival. The porter came immediately.

"Take this letter for me to the post," said I to him; "as I pass near the station, I will myself take my friend's portmanteau."

All went well, and we attracted no attention. In the evening I returned to the hotel. I caused our prisoner to be asked if he would receive me. He had become cooler, and except for a violent tirade against the Poles, was very calm and dignified. His honorary guardian profited by my arrival to go and take some rest. The day had been very warm; but in the evening, after a sharp shower, the air had become refreshing; we seated ourselves near the large open window, both in silence. I was thirsty; the officer rang, and had some ice, water, lemon, sugar, and rum brought; and while he was preparing sherbet, conversation began between us. I made an appeal to all his noble and generous feelings, in order to show him the enormity of homicide committed out of warfare. I endeavoured to induce him to write to his comrade, and to trust me with the missive. But all I could say failed to move him.

My fellow-countryman who had been placed on guard, returned after taking some rest. It was nearly two o'clock in the morning, and I was then free to depart.

Thus half the danger was averted. But there remained the other half, in the person of the other officer, uncaught. We were driven to our last and most perilous resource, that of posting a guard at the railway station of the Frankfort-on-the-Oder and Königsberg line, which the grand-duke must take in order to return to St. Petersburg. Ten Poles were ordered to be at the station and its approaches; we had, moreover, some Prussian policemen in our pay; to two of whom I gave an order to be on the platform.

The evening arrived; I took my large blue cotton umbrella, with which I have travelled in Poland on my most perilous journeys. This umbrella has such an unsuspecting appearance, that it has done wonders for me many a time. I betook myself to the station; all our people were at their posts; it was getting towards half-past eight; the train was to leave in an hour and a half, and the grand-duke was expected a quarter of an hour before its departure.

I walked about the waiting-rooms, having

myself the air of a *bonâ fide* traveller, when suddenly I caught sight of Mr. White, the English vice-consul at Warsaw; the most straightforward and most honourable and gentlemanly of all the official personages with whom I ever had to do. Recognising me, he said: "What are you doing here? You ought to know it is not a safe place for you!" We had exchanged but a few words, when one of my fellow-countrymen made me a sign. Our prisoner's fellow-conspirator had arrived at the station. After a struggle of short duration he had been bundled by our men into a vehicle. Happily the night was very dark. Some luggage-porters who saw the scene burst out laughing, and said: "That's a fellow who has forgotten to pay his bill!" From a long Colt's revolver, with six barrels loaded, the property of the officer, the charges were quickly drawn. At this moment the grand-duke arrived, with several carriages. One of the King of Prussia's brothers was with him, and M. d'Oubril, the Russian ambassador.

We did not yet go away, but each of six of us who remained took a post of observation until the departure of the train. The brother of the czar little thought that he was surrounded by a secret Polish guard, and little dreamed of the danger he had escaped through the benign influence of the Pole Star.

UP-HILL WORK.

To long and not to have, like Tantalus; to have and not to hold, like the Danaides; to feed, from one's own life, a vulture gorging without thankfulness, like Prometheus—were punishments quite worthy of Dis and Hades; but worse than all these was the doom of poor old Sisyphus, for ever rolling his stone up-hill—the doom of eternal striving without fulfilment—the curse of unending effort never attaining success. Poor old Sisyphus is the type of the class of the disappointed among ourselves. Few things are harder to bear than the disappointment which lies in frustrated effort. To forego the good thing promised through the grace without, is not an overwhelming grief; but the labour which is in vain—the strength put forth to mere waste—the hope proved delusion—the high-set aim with our arrow falling short—all these represent the true curse of Sisyphus in the shame and anguish of failure. Miserable copies of old Sisyphus as we are, the stone which we have rolled with infinite pains and trouble to the summit, returns with a sounding clang to our feet, and the labour of years—it may be of our whole life—is in vain.

Little comfort it brings to us to know that we have quarried our stone in the first instance by our own folly; and that we have only ourselves to thank for its weight, its uncomfortable angles, and the swarm of creeping things about its base. What good did it do my poor uncle, ruminating painfully in his pleasant parsonage, to say sorrowfully, "I have only myself to thank

for it," when the scourge of his college debts and college vices fell on him a little more heavily than usual? My uncle had been what in his day passed for manly; what in ours we would call "fast." He drank, gamed, raced, betted, and rioted with the best of them; he could not pour out money like water, because he had no money to pour; but he incurred debts in heroic masses, and went to the Jews more steadily than he went to chapel, coming back with cent per cent as his litany: in a word, always hewing and hacking at the Sisyphusian stone he would have to spend his future life in trying to roll off his glebe. His father, a stern man of puritan principles and limited income, left him to his hewing and hacking undisturbed; objecting, not unreasonably, to being made the scapegoat for the boy's sins, the liquidator of his liabilities. Besides, he had other sons and daughters whose pathway from the paternal homestead he had to mark out with golden borderings; and would he be justified in sending them out into the world unaided, that he might give all his strength to one? would it be fair to diminish the patrimony of his own for the benefit of half a dozen university bloodsuckers who could better afford to lose their money than he to pay it?

A poor living, however pleasant the parsonage and sweet the roses and honeysuckle adorning it, a large family, a sickly wife, and boys who went the same way as himself, have kept him grinding at stone-rolling from the first years of his manhood to the last. When he dies his executors will not be able to lodge the boulder more than half way up to the top of the hill, amid the sneers, if not the wrath, of the creditors.

Another roller up-hill of stones for which there is no resting-place, is the man of high aspiration and low executive power—the inglorious Milton, not wise enough to be mute, but summoning all the world to listen to his halting feet and cracked measures—assembling the universe to witness his prowess in rolling the poetic stone up to the top of Parnassus. To witness, instead, the swift descent of a mass of rubbish sent flying down the steep incline amid the laughter of the gods, and the contemptuous jests of men. What can we do for the poor inglorious Milton shivering in the ruin of his poetic monolith? It may be cruel to laugh and jeer, but it would be far more cruel to pick up the pieces and try to patch them into a usable boulder again, bidding him take courage and a better aim, and he would be sure to lodge his stone right in the Temple of the Muses, with no laughter of gods or men to follow. His aspirations may be very high, his thoughts and aims undoubtedly pure and good; but if he wants the executive power, of what earthly use his rolling up poetic monoliths for the mere amusement of unruly folk, glad to see them tumble back into the dead level of failure again, making a prodigious splash of dust and mud as they fall? Far better that he should carry his shoulders to some useful mechanical wheel, such

as grinds corn, or brings up water, or stitches together the children's garments—far better that he should sit in a shady corner on the highway and break stones for the great ones' chariots to pass over, than lose time and strength and the substance of his hands in enacting the part of old Sisyphus in Hades. Whatever our sorrow and sympathy for him individually, the eternal laws of failure remain the same; and the fact that wasted strength is so much loss to the world of man, and misdirected effort so much discouragement to the generations to follow, will not be modified even for the bitter heart-pain of an inglorious Milton mistaking his vocation, and rolling stones up Parnassus to end in failure and a shower of dust and mud.

This may stand good for all men assuming the art-life for which nature did not design them; for musicians torturing the crying soul of untuned catgut, yet getting no harmony, and making no melody; for painters to whom is denied the true perception of colour, and the right reproduction of form; for architects building from the rubble of another man's ideas and losing the cement by the way; for authors with brains like that Australian lake, not six inches deep even in the rainy season, and as salt as brine at all times. For all men wasting in needless stone-rolling the time and faculty that might go to useful sowing and reaping, does the fate of Sisyphus stand as a warning and example; and the shower of mud following the descent of the poetic monolith follows equally the descent of all others rolled upward with insufficient motive power.

A very frequent manner of rolling Sisyphusian stones is to be seen in the frantic efforts of certain folk to force the barriers of what is called Good Society. It may be in London, or it may be in the country, that this up-hill fight goes on. In both places it may be seen any day in full vigour; and if sometimes crowned with success, and the tranquil resting of the stone on the hill-top, yet sometimes also, and perhaps more frequently, uncrowned with such success, and the stone falling back again into the plain, prostrate and repulsed. Men and women with more money than manners, and better luck in speculation than they ever had in schooling, often spend their lives in trying to get to the top of the hill, where they would be vastly uncomfortable if they did get, and quite out of place with the high-bred ants and emmets inhabiting. Which elevation, a kind fortune in the guise of a crabbed, uniformly forbids. They are people who will learn no lessons set them by circumstance; who will take no hints gently whispered by fate; but who go boring on with their stone-rolling, and try and try again as if their very lives, or what is more, their salvation, consisted in being adopted by certain fine ladies and gentlemen as their "social equals." Heaven help them! The grave will make them all social equals before another fifty years are out, and when they are laid side by side in Kensal-green it will not be of much value whether the one was successfully exclusive, or the other

successfully intrusive. In any case, of final halting on the top of the hill or not, it is a sadly unprofitable way of spending the time given us as a day-school for eternity; and there is no need to waste much sympathy on the miserable Sisyphus who has placed his soul's chief good in the drawing-rooms of certain fellow-mortals, and who, in striving after that good, gets his knuckles well rapped, and his toes well pinched, by the headlong descent of the stone so laboriously hoisted.

Others, also spending their lives in the same endeavour, have the disadvantage against them of a blot on the family arms, or their own hands not always kept in ermine-like purity and cleanliness. Either of which dead weights makes the stone-rolling of acceptance into good society a very Sisyphusian matter indeed, and the rebuffs, and tumbles backward, and sprawlings prostrate in the great plain of failures, well bespattered, of quite as frequent occurrence as the liftings and the strainings. One can understand this manner of stone-rolling though, as emblemising the condonation of past offences—the whitewashing of befouled escutcheons, the cleansing of bemired hands. Taken in this light it has its value, and is not altogether of such contemptible activity as that involved in the attempt to obtain an arm-chair in grand houses, where rightfully, according to the rightfulness of social fitness, Sisyphus has no business, and ought not to put in his appearance at all. But how many people are there, who, instead of being contented with pleasant ledges flower strewn, and the shady angles to be found half way up the social hill, where they might sit and take their ease for ever, lose all the advantages of the one without gaining any of the other; and so, striving ever to reach the summit which rejects them ignominiously, pass by the pleasant places where they might have rested at their ease, obtaining nothing in the struggle but unending failure and enduring shame.

Another and a graver manner of rolling stones up-hill, with apparently as hopeless results, is to be found with all teachers and preachers of good doctrines, not palatable to the grosser multitude. This rolling the stone of truth up-hill is hard work; for it is sure to come clattering down again in a shower of ancient sins, so soon as it seems to have reached the top, bringing with it a cloud of dust obscuring all visible things for the time being. Every teacher of good doctrines, every preacher of new truths, bewails this sadly certain result. Sometimes, indeed, the stone comes back like the boomerang, on the head of the sender; and sometimes it brings with it a fagot all in flames and a san benito fluttering on a pole; and sometimes a sharpened knife; and sometimes a hempen cord with a running knot just fitting under the left ear; the meeds and guerdons of those who roll stones the multitude would rather were left undisturbed. Line upon line and precept upon precept—inch by inch, ledge by ledge, tract by tract, Sisyphus, as the

teacher, rolls his stone up the steep hill of human ignorance and vice; he clears this broken bit of ground, he avoids that tract of thorny scrub, he surmounts that formidable crag—bad habits, prejudice, and pride, he overcomes them all—and his stone rolls slowly on to the hill-top. He utters his *Io* pæans and takes breath after his labour; but in a moment the pleasant dream of rest and success is broken, down comes the stone of truth, tearing across the face of the steep hill; for whatever else may have been conquered, a platform of stability, broad and level enough for its sure resting-place, has not been gained. And so, all his labour is in vain, and the work must be begun anew. Every earnest pastor, every zealous schoolmaster, every conscientious parent, will echo these words: they will all confess to the perpetual falling back into chaotic ruin of the stones with which they had hoped to build an enduring temple of truth in the young souls hanging on them for noble guidance. They will all sigh over the incessant repetition of effort needed, and the depressing recurrence of failure. They will all understand feelingly the myth of Sisyphus in Hades, and know what rolling stones up-hill without ever reaching the summit, or resting in success, means as a spiritual parable.

Making unacceptable love, culminating in rejected offers of marriage, is another kind of stone-rolling never out of date. Some men spend the best years of their lives in this kind of thing, always essaying the impossible, and unable to take the first No for the final one. Heavily rolling up the unlovely stone over every delicate fence-work set up to keep off such ponderous boulders, at last they reach the top, where they have all along persuaded themselves stands a cozy little harbour full of blisses, and kisses, and roses, and doves, and skewered hearts, and all the rest of it, with "Rest and be thankful" printed in golden letters across a sky-blue ground outside. No evidence midway can persuade them that their cozy little harbour is a mere hallucination of the senses, a mere phantasy and make-up of their own. On they go, plodding painfully; and when they reach the top and make the final and unmistakable essay, which must be success or failure—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, in the space of a sob—down comes the stone with a clatter on to the plain, sometimes breaking the heart of poor Sisyphus as it falls.

Another rolls his stone up the parliamentary incline, without ever reaching the summit where St. Stephen's stands; another jerks his from race-course to race-course, and from stable to stable, but always lands in the mire, whatever the colours wrapped round his boulder; another tries coal-pits; another gold-mines; another crack companies; and another new inventions; all with eyes fixed on the same point—the golden image of generous Fortune standing like a shining beacon on the top of the hill up which they hoist their stones with diligence more praiseworthy than successful. Some make themselves into the likeness of old Sisyphus in

the matter of competitive examinations, and the comparative weight of testimonials for secretarieships and the like; some in their endeavours to edge up to a secure foothold among the "staff" of a daily paper say, or to the still higher ledge of editorial authority; and others throw up stones nightly over the footlights, aiming at public favour and histrionic success, yet never winning their cast, and always tumbling backward among the scene-shifters.

Many other Sisyphusian ways of wasting time and energies remain uncatalogued here, but painfully rampant in the daily lives of men and women. Pictures perseveringly sent to an unappreciating hanging committee, or as perseveringly exhibited to a non-purchasing public; books industriously laid on the tables of yawning readers; manuscripts hopefully sent to denying publishers; articles deluging the tables of fastidious editors; operas at which the prima donna stops her ears and the conductor tears his hair; sublime bits of poetry cut up into mince-meat by merciless critics; theories with only one wooden leg to stand on, and that a shaky one; "points" at which the pit laughs when it should weep; pleadings which turn the jury to the right when it was desired to turn them to the left; are not all these Sisyphusian stones toilsomely dragged up-hill, only to come down again with a thud heavy enough to break a man's back, if, by chance, striking the arch? Misdirected energy, wasted strength, disappointed ambition, frustrated effort, and dreams taken for realities, are all mere Sisyphusian stones—from the barren labour of dragging which up-hill may common sense and the faculty of correct social engineering keep me and you, my brother, my friend!

A LIFT IN THE WORLD.

WHEN for days, and even weeks, my eyes had rested every morning regularly on the advertisements of THE ROYAL METROPOLIS PALACE COMPANY (LIMITED, indeed, only as regards liability), and read the reckless flaming way in which the advantages of the proposed establishment were introduced to the public—spreading over half columns and columns of newspapers, I little thought the day would come when my whole happiness would be curiously connected with that famous speculation. As I read of the four hundred beds they were to "put up," and of the enormous dining-room, where the four hundred guests could be feasted; of the ladies' sitting-room, decorated in the Arabesque manner by Owen Jones; and of the spacious hall, the telegraphy, the "grand stair," the great pond that was laid out upon the roof, and, above all, of the magic "lift" which so mysteriously carried human beings up to the top flight of all—I little dreamed that a theatre was about being built which was to be the scene of a drama full of the strangest and most absorbing interest for me.

Latterly, business, travel, and what not, had necessitated my absence from home for nearly

two years. One of the reasons for this prolonged sojourn I must not conceal. From early youth—even from a time preceding early youth—I had never been "strong," as it is called. Unfortunately, one night, long after both these stages had been gone through, I had sat up a whole night on the deck of a steamer, in defiance of warnings and remonstrances. It was a romantic night, and the time passed very sweetly indeed; but towards morning heavy dews came on, which settled on my chest. In a week, "marked pulmonary symptoms" set in, to use my doctor's phrase; and in a month I had been "brought round," to use another of his phrases, with the exception of a confirmed difficulty of breathing. He said it was a tendency to asthma; it struck me as being entitled to all the honours of that description. It soon became so troublesome that I was recommended to go about and travel—which I did.

I came home by Ostend. The morning on which I got down to the port was a very "stiff" one, and the packet lay outside the harbour. We had to get on board in boats. We got to the boat—we had to descend a very slippery ladder. I got down safely, and saw that a fresh gay young lady in screams of laughter was following, in that natural embarrassment about her dress which seems always to attend on the operations of ladies descending ladders or companion-stairs. She had a dressing-case in one hand, a gepecke, as the Germans have it, of shawls and cloaks in the other, and she came down facing the audience. I ran—that is, got up—to her assistance, kept the dress well down; and, though I was rising and falling like a fisherman's float, owing to the rocking of the boat, I fancy I performed a real service. Her dressing-case was stowed away under a bench; with the assistance of a lurch, the young lady herself was settled into her seat with much laughter and enjoyment. A few miserable-looking passengers—ghastly by anticipation—looking with disgust on the raw sea and open boat, and accepting the ladder as though it were the ladder of a scaffold, were assisted down, and then the boat, spreading an Indian ink coloured sail, began to swirl and roll through the waters.

The little incident of a dressing-case and the descent of the ladder was quite sufficient to justify a travelling intimacy. We were delightfully pleasant during that little voyage in the open boat. She was a hoiden, and wished the sail to be stretched tightly, so as "to make the boat," she said, "lean well over." The sailors were inclined to gratify her, admiring her spirit and relish for nautical matters. But the rueful passengers, ill already, and whose travelling-caps seemed like the nightcaps of invalids, protested with anger and surliness against any such tricks. We both laughed more and more; and, when we got to the delicate-looking airy little French steamer which was lying far out, we were in high good humour with each other. I thought that she was travelling

alone; but it turned out that she was to meet her brother on board, who was to come off with the next open boat with all the luggage. While we waited for him, leaning over the bulwarks of the ship, she with her parasol up, and both of us looking across the sea towards the shore, she told me a few little particulars about herself. Her name was Flora Darling; she was coming from a French school near Paris; that is to say, from a school where English young ladies were taken in, and which was kept by Miss Tweaker, who in Bradshaw's Guide could proudly refer to the Reverend Rupert Twells, Chaplain at the Embassy, to the Reverend Beaver Bowler, Chaplain at the Watering-places, and to the Lord Bishop of Sloper's Island.

How old was her brother? I asked; that is, Miss Darling's brother?

"Only fourteen," she said. "Scarcely a chaperone," she added, with a burst of laughter; "only a few months from the nursery. There was no harm in it. One could do anything travelling, you know."

"To be sure," I said. "Darling—Darling!" She started.

"I was repeating your name," I said, smiling. "A charming one—so musical and melodious—Darling! I shall be saying it in the carriage all the way up to town—Darling." (I put the very slightest ghost of a pause between the two last words.) As it was, she looked at me curiously, and burst out laughing.

"You say it so funnily," she said. "I half suspect you are very wicked. It's a pity, isn't it, that I must lose it one day? So they tell me. It's in the natural course of things, you know."

"Inevitable," I said. "You *must* lose it, Darling—the name, I mean. It would be no more in nature," I added, fervently, "for you to retain that name, than that—you could fly backwards through that water to the town over there."

(I was a little hard set for a comparison, but this did fairly well.)

"I was very near flying backwards down the steps," she said, with a burst of laughter, "only for you."

"Yes," I said. "I believe I had the happiness of saving you, Darling."

"Now," she said, in a grave voice, "I must interdict your using that name of mine, for fear of any mistakes."

"You do me wrong," I said. "Your brother—I was speaking of him. He is a Darling, too, is he not? At least in his way, I mean," I added hastily, amending my speech, for fear she should think I put any one on the same level with herself.

The brother was a cub. He was about as intelligent and as useful as a walking-stick. No better choice could have been made. We might talk all the way up to town as if we were alone.

We had a pleasant voyage. The rest of the passengers were very unwell; which contributed a good deal to the pleasantness; for we were both perfectly well, and laughed a good deal at their

sufferings. We got to Dover, landed—this time without boats (which I was a little sorry for, as I had begun to like that operation of descending ladders)—and passed the Customs successfully. The Darling gave me her keys; which, through my skill and adroitness—that is to say, powers of corruption—were rendered quite unnecessary. We passed a splendid examination (as she put it comically, seated in the carriage), while the miserable passengers who had been ill were reeling about, mistaking the Customs for their trunks, and the officers for sailors. She told me in confidence some details. Where was she going to in town? To that new great hotel just opened, where they could "put up" four hundred beds, and where there was the ladies' sitting-room decorated in the Arabesque manner by Owen Jones, and where there was a pneumatic hoist which—

It sounded like a dream. Had I not heard all this before? and my prospectus-reading of two years occurred to me.

"You mean," I said, "the Grand Metropolitan, Limited, in forty thousand shares of five pounds each. So much paid up. Why, it was only talked of then."

"It is a good deal talked of now," said a gentleman with whiskers like a plate brusher. "About the finest thing in London. People go there who don't want to go to an hotel—who are actually at another hotel. Merely for the luxury of the thing. It is marvellous the perfection they have brought the thing to. So many thousand tons of water on the roof."

"I think I shall go there too," I said, enthusiastically. "I have a lodging secured already, but I would far sooner go to such an hotel—where the darling—I mean Miss Darling—goes to!" She asked me then how long I was to stay in London. I replied, "An indefinite time," that it might stretch from a day to a year. On which she told me that she was determined to enjoy herself; until, at least, her uncle came up from the country to fetch her. That would be in a week or ten days, or a fortnight, she did not care how far off. "If," said I, gravely, "in the absence of your excellent uncle, a third person would be of any use to you, or, I should rather say, if you would allow that person to make himself useful to you during your stay in the great metropolis, you would be conferring a favour on him—a real favour, I think," I added, "as the inmate of the same hotel—the probable inmate—he has some claim upon you. In this life, surely we should all help one another a little."

A curious light came into her eyes. She was going to reply favourably, when suddenly she gave a start, half jumped up and clapped her hands. "Why, there he is," she cried in delight; "Call to him! Stop him! Bring him to me!"

Here was the old uncle. Confusion on him! I went reluctantly to the window, and looked up and down. "I can't see him," I said; "I don't see any one!"

"To be sure there he is," she said, impatiently,

and going to the window herself. "There! Mr. Ridley, come here."

A man in a slate-coloured tunic, turned up in the worst taste with orange, and carrying a rifle, looked back. He was the plainest creature I ever saw, and was quite smooth shaved. He came running up.

"Ah," he said, "is that you? What a surprise!"

"Isn't it?" she said. "And who'd ever have thought of meeting you here? Get in, will you? Of course you will."

"I have got this musket and bag, government stores, so must be careful, you know; but if you will have us all——"

"I am afraid," I said, "we could scarcely accommodate both you and your weapon. There is a large party coming back, a family—and if they find their seats gone——"

"Nonsense," he said; "why didn't they keep them? At all events, you can tell them you did your best to keep them, and that I took them." And on that he came pushing in, with his heavy gun and bag, which kept dropping on the ground, to the great risk of our feet.

"There," said he, at last, sitting down between me and her, and fanning his hot tan face with his handkerchief. "There we are. This is all uncommon nice, I can tell you. Did I ever think, when I turned out of my bed this morning—which, by the way, was at five o'clock—that all this was in store for me? I did not, indeed." And he burst into that most objectionable of all laughs, known as the "guffaw," or horse-laugh. He was carrying his great musket between his knees, and I saw that his fingers were still black with powder. "We had a field-day to-day," he went on, "and a rifle-match against the local Whitechapel fellows. Licked them soundly. What could you expect from Whitechaps? I am so tired and hungry. You haven't the little sandwich-box, eh—the old sandwich-box? No. I thought not."

"No," she said; "but I am so glad we met—we shall have such fun. And O, Ridley"—this was nice familiarity, addressing a gentleman by his surname!—"O, Ridley, I am going to stay in London for a week, at the great new hotel, you know—what do you call it?"

It will have been observed that all this time I was in a manner passed over; that I had sunk into an inglorious obscurity, being precipitated from my former prosperity. Feeling this wanton degradation very acutely, I saw an opportunity here, and struck in:

"You mean the new Metropolitan Hotel Palace Company, Limited, I think?"

"Yes," she said; "it is all the same, I believe."

For the first time he looked at me straight, beginning with my sleeves, and so on upwards. Presently he whispered to her with a curious smile, and she whispered to him, and smiled too. During the whole of the rest of the journey to London they talked, and chattered, and whispered in this confidential way. Near the end I think she got ashamed of the ungrateful

way in which she was behaving to me. After all, I had laid her under some obligation as regards the dressing-case and that descent of the ladder. But it was no matter. When the coarse Ridley got out at stations—which he did at nearly every one to fill what he called his "pocket-pistol"—we got on again into the old friendly footing. I began to think she was a little intimidated by his presence.

We arrived in London. "We can wait here," he said to her, "and Tommy shall get us a cab." I had got my own luggage very quickly, and it lay on the ground beside me. I had also secured the dressing-case, to which I had certainly a little claim from past services. Suddenly the hateful Ridley looked down. "You needn't," he said. "Here. Give it me. Thank you!"

I resisted this attempt. "I beg your pardon," I said. "I have a sort of claim—have I not?" I said to her, with a half smile.

"Good gracious!" she said, "how? Uncle bought it for me when I went to school."

"O, I don't mean *that*," I said. "I mean coming down the ladder—you recollect."

"What the devil do you mean?" he said, roughly. "Give the lady her case, confound it;" and with a sudden jerk he snatched it from me.

She saw the reproachful look in my face. "I am so much obliged to you," she said; "I mistook—you know."

Here was the cab. They got in. I stood by, waiting, looking with a strange expression at the seat. "We are all going to the same hotel," I said, "the Metropolitan Palace, Limited—not as regards room certainly, according to all account," I added, repeating my little joke to mollify him.

"Exactly," he said; "I think we have everything in now. Would you tell the fellow Metropolitan Hotel?"

"I see there is one vacant place," I said, reproachfully to her.

"Go on," he called; and they did go on.

We went to the same hotel. I was ravished, as the French say, with the magnificence of its proportions and decorations. But that was only the first feeling. Another, and another of another sort altogether, succeeded almost immediately. That feeling was her—or she (which should it be?). The fatal dressing-case, and the more fatal descent down the ladder into the boat, had done its work and had made me more or less indifferent to Going Jones and his Arabian work, to the four hundred beds that had been "put up," and even to that "hoist" or "lift" which moved by hydraulic power.

Ah! The lift. I am coming to that now. I used to meet her constantly. In the morning. In the evening. In the hall. In the great dining-room (where I *never* could get placed near her). She was always kind and good to me; but she was always with that Ridley. I am inclined to believe now that the odious volunteer exercised a terrorism over her, the effect of which she had too much self-respect to let me see. He was living there; so was Tommy. She was living there; so was I. I may as well confess it now, I used to lie

in wait for her in the hall, on all manner of flimsy pretexts; either until she came down, or came in, or came up. But whether she came down or came up, somehow that Ridley fellow always contrived to thrust himself upon her. By some intriguing *he* managed to sit beside her at the dinners. No doubt she rebelled against this tyranny and persecution. Meanwhile, my life was becoming almost intolerable from agitation and struggle, and I felt it must end in some way—not life, but the state of things generally.

I have spoken of coming up and of going down; and I have avoided hitherto coming directly to that portion of the narrative. There hangs thereby more than would be conceived—more certainly hangs, than the simple chamber which the mysterious agency of science, as manifested in the hydraulic apparatus, raised so many times in the day to the top of the house. I have alluded before to the cruel pulmonary infirmity to which I was a sufferer, and which unfortunately about this time began to be more troublesome than usual. The house was very full, so I had to be content with a chamber very near to the roof, a region which would have been practically unattainable by me but for the blessings of modern science. The “lift” was my salvation—my pulmonary salvation. I enjoyed my rides in the lift, and relished the mode of travelling so much, that I made it the excuse for many journeys to and from my room. But there was yet another meaning in it. *She*, like most other guests, availed herself of it. Am I followed *now*? And when I was lying in wait, as I may call it, in the hall, I confess to a little artifice. When she had entered the apparatus, I used to emerge, feign having forgotten a pocket-handkerchief, or some other article, and would be transported in her delightful society up to the roof. It was charming; I could have gone up and down from year’s end to year’s end, without ever getting out. But that, of course, could not be. At last it all came to an end, and the lift—accursed invention—was at the bottom of it. I mean morally. Here are the particulars:

The very first journey we had made together he was there too, looking at me with undisguised insolence and jealousy. She had called out, with great laughing and clapping of hands:

“I say, Ridley, Ridley! What a place to make a proposal in! Fancy two people shut up here together!”

He laughed loudly. “A good idea,” he said; “worth making a note of.”

“Not at all a bad idea,” I said, from a corner of the “lift.”

He looked at me, as he always did when I spoke.

“The only difficulty,” he said, “is, that under certain circumstances it is almost impossible for two people to get the opportunity of being alone. There are busy-bodies who will be always sticking themselves in where they are not wanted, and to whom, I think, for the good of the house even, I must give a lesson.”

“As for that,” I said, smiling, “so despotic a course would scarcely be tolerated. The lift,

as we all know, is public—like a weighing-machine—or the pavement of Regent-street. The proprietor might as well shut up as introduce any restriction of the kind you allude to.” He burst out laughing to hide the effect of my quiet retort. She laughed too. “You see,” I said to her, “his plan would scarcely answer.”

“I shall think of something that will, though,” he said.

In a few days, however, there was a curious change. When she came into the hall with him, and while I was lying in wait until she should have entered the lift, she suddenly turned and said, “O, that machine is too troublesome. The stairs are twice as fast. What do you say to a race, Ridley?” And off she bounded, with that person in pursuit. For the moment, my instinct was to follow also; but a few steps at a rapid pace soon showed me that I must stop. The pulmonary affection developed itself in a second, and, at the end of the first flight, I was panting in deep distress.

I grieve to say, that under the instigation of Ridley she carried out his unworthy tactics steadily on every occasion. They always went up by the stairs, and, as a matter of habit, avoided the lift. I had to make solitary journeys by the hydraulic agency. One evening, however, I found that I could bear it no longer. I said to myself that it must come to a crisis, one way or the other. Which was the one way or which was the other way, I did not know and did not care; but the way should be discovered. As I was brooding over this, the idea suddenly flashed upon me. What if the pulmonary affection were not so confirmed? What if I braved its effects—tried—went into training a little? I might baffle it—and be once more on equal terms with the enemy.

I almost at once began to act on the suggestion; with a little practice I found my power of endurance improving marvellously; I progressed in a steady ratio. To my surprise, I found that when I could effect two flights of stairs on one day, I could manage three on the following day. This promised well. And, the better to carry out my design, I determined to keep my training, as I might call it, a secret, until I was perfect. Just as I was nearly perfect—which was on a Saturday—the news came to me that she was going away, that her uncle had written for her, and that she must leave by the four o’clock train. She did not tell me this herself, but I overheard her telling it to her Ridley friend. No time, therefore, was to be lost. Whatever I had to do, had best be done, if it were to be done, done quickly. This is not the precise form of words used by the immortal William; but it conveys his idea pretty accurately. In a moment I had the plan settled. Nearly the whole day I waited in or about the hall for her to come in. I had determined, in a word—bearing in mind the remark so disparaging to a faint heart—to be bold and speak. I was in ambuscade I say the whole day, in or about the hall, rushing out of concealment whenever I heard any one coming. I believe the young lady who looked after the books and accounts,

at first thought I had designs on the property under her care; but afterwards fancied I was a little "touched in the upper story." I could almost laugh at this notion now, for the upper story *had* something to do with my troubles.

Two—three—still she did not come. Surely she would pack? At least, if she trusted to a disorderly huddling up of her clothes, "anyhow," she was scarcely the girl I took her for. No—of course she had packed already. Ah, she was hurrying in—just in time—I ran to her.

"Could you spare me a few moments—a hurried interview," I said, much agitated, "before you go? Five minutes would be sufficient."

"Bless you, my dear sir, I haven't five seconds, I must be at the train at four."

"Three minutes, then," I said, with reproach, "two—you have been very unkind to me lately, and I did think, after the dressing-case and the ladder——"

"I assure you," she said, "I meant nothing—never intended it, at least."

"No," said I, "it wasn't *you*. I know perfectly well who poisoned you——"

She coloured a little.

"Poisoned me!"

"Let me," said I, passionately, "let me go up with you, and speak what I have to say as we go up. I can go up-stairs now. I have learned how."

"Go up-stairs now?" she said, looking at me with wonder.

"Yes," I went on, "I have been training myself secretly, when you little thought what I was about. I began with one flight; then, emboldened by success, went on to two——"

There was a rush behind me. "Bless you," he said, "you haven't twenty minutes to get to the train. Where are the trunks and things?"

"All ready," she said. "I am just going up-stairs, and shall be down in a second."

"Up-stairs!" he said; "isn't there the lift? We won't mind it," he added, laughing, "as it is the last time, and besides, I have something to tell you *privately*."

I looked at her bitterly.

"You *said* you'd take the stairs; but no matter." I turned to go.

"Do come," he said, taking her hand, and drawing her to the lift. "And as for you, sir, for God's sake keep off, and stop worrying us."

She went with him. Suddenly she turned and said to me in a kind voice, "I am sorry to disappoint you, but if you *have* anything to tell, or any message, you can go round by the stairs, and meet me at the top."

A capital idea. I gave her a look of intelligence to show that I understood the terrorism under which she was acting.

He slammed the door of the apparatus. They began to ascend, and I rushed round and began what was literally for me a terrific and daring ascent. I was racing against time. I took three stairs at each stride. I believe there were

four hundred in all. When I had done about two-thirds of the way, I began to feel signs of distress. I was gasping, tottering; but I still held on. My training was failing me—my false, faithless, treacherous training. They would be gone—be down even before me. But I held on.

At last I was at the top, and O joy! there was she waiting patiently on the landing. She saw me come in—panting, blowing, drooping, with my head on one side, and my tongue hanging out. I could have tumbled forward at her feet, but caught the banister. Her face was all lit up with pleasure and delight and sympathy.

"Now," said she, "I can give you a minute, while Mr. Ridley has gone to see about the trunks. What do you want?"

"*You*?" I gasped out, with a sort of blow and guggle.

"*Me*," she said, starting back.

"Yes," I said, "you must have—seen—it—long a-go—O my—(I shall never get over it! Early pulmonary. Deck of a vessel!)—I have a good competence, and shall make you ha—ha—happy. O, I have no wi—ind——"

She burst out laughing. "My dear sir, this is so kind and so flattering, and I assure you I appreciate it. But it is unfortunate; you are a little bit late; O ever so little."

"Late," I cried, holding my side, and gasping.

"Yes," she said, "Mr. Ridley has been a little before you."

"Before me!" I cried, starting back. "When? Where? How?"

"Only two seconds ago," she said, leaning down her head, but from a different cause to that which affected mine. "He has just proposed for me—in the lift."

"IN THE LIFT!" I cried, with a stamp. "O infernal hydraulic power. O wretched apparatus."

"It was so fortunate," she went on; "if I had gone up by the stairs with you, it perhaps might *never* have occurred. Every hotel should have 'a lift.'"

NEW WORK BY MR. DICKENS,
In Monthly Parts, uniform with the Original Editions of
"Pickwick," "Copperfield," &c.

Now publishing, PART XV., price 1s., of

OUR MUTUAL FRIEND.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

IN TWENTY MONTHLY PARTS.

With Illustrations by MARCUS STONE.
London: CHAPMAN and HALL, 193, Piccadilly.

Just published, in one vol., small post 8vo.
In fancy boards, 2s. 6d.; also Library Edition, crown 8vo.,
cloth extra, 3s.

THE BUBBLES OF FINANCE.

Being a Reprint of Articles which have appeared in this
Journal.

By A CITY MAN.

London: HAMILTON LOW, SON, and MARSHALL,
14, Ludgate-hill.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND is reserved by the Authors.